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Columbia City Election Results 2 year term for Mayor

Corey Mitchell 40 votes
Dana Mohr 27 votes

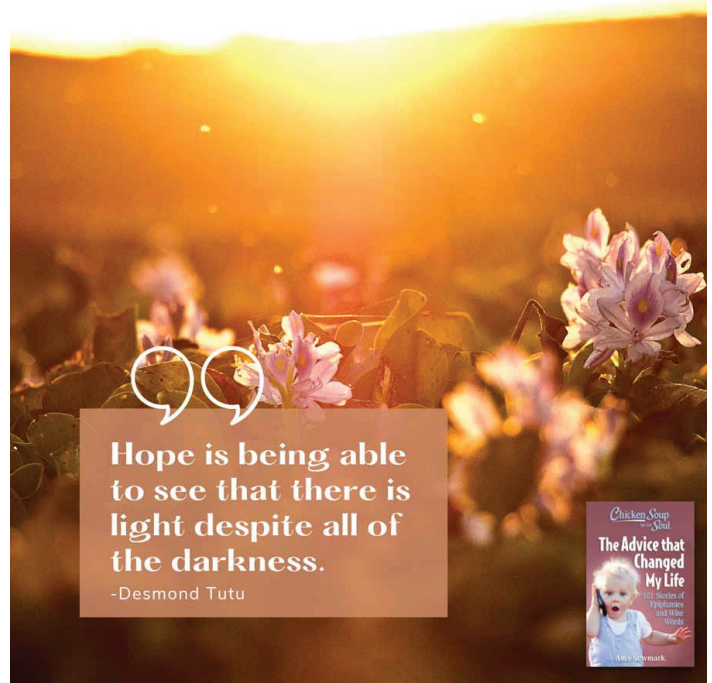
Groton Community Calendar Wednesday, April 12

Chamber Meeting, noon, at City Hall
Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Egg omelets.
School Lunch: Nachos.
Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Book Study with Lindsey Tietz, 4 p.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.

Thursday, April 13

Senior Menu: Hamburger on bun with lettuce, tomato and onion, potato salad, cucumber salad, fresh fruit.
School Breakfast: Muffins.
School Lunch: Chicken sandwich, fries.

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Friday, April 14
Senior Menu: Potato soup, ham salad sandwich, tomato spoon salad, carrot bars
School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage.
School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, peas.
All School Play, 7 p.m.
Indoor track meet at Barnett Center, 10 a.m.

Saturday, April 15
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.
All School Play, 4 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

The Bulletin by Newsweek

JANUARY 24, 2023

World in Brief

Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan, accusing the Republican of a "transparent campaign to intimidate and attack" over his indictment of Donald Trump.

- Shelby County commissioners will vote today to reappoint expelled Democrat Justin Pearson, amid alleged Republican threats to cut funding if he rejoins the chamber.
- North Dakota's Republican Governor Doug Burgum has signed two bans on transgender athletes into law, blocking trans girls from joining female-only sports teams in K-12 and college.
- The U.S., Panama, and Columbia will launch a two-month campaign to curb the flow of undocumented immigrants through the Darien Gap, a region that logged about 88,000 crossings in the first quarter of 2023.
- The mother of a 6-year-old who shot his teacher in Newport News, Virginia, in January has been charged with felony child neglect and recklessly leaving a firearm to endanger a child. She is expected to turn herself in this week.
- A Chinese woman has become the first person to die from a rare type of bird flu, according to the World Health Organization, though the strain does not appear to spread between people.
- Head of Mexico's National Immigration Institute, Francisco Garduño, and other top migration officials will face criminal charges for a fire that killed 40 migrants in a detention center last month, the Attorney General's Office said.
- In the ongoing war in Ukraine, the Russian parliament passed legislation to start serving electronic military draft papers for the first time in history. Despite Russia's denial, the move is seen as an attempt to boost military forces for the war.

- Louisville police released bodycam footage showing officers confronting the gunman who killed five people on Monday. In Tennessee, Gov. Bill Lee signed an executive order tightening gun laws weeks after a shooting in Nashville left six dead.

- President Joe Biden will meet U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in Belfast, marking the start of a three-day tour of Ireland to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement.

- Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg sued House

Groton City Sump Pump Alert



Sump pumps must be discharged outside (not in the sanitary sewer).



Thanks for your immediate compliance!

**Failure to comply will result in fines.
Groton City Council**

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Spring restrictions are in place

Spring is here, and so are sewer restrictions and adjusted garbage routes.

As the weather warms up, there's a big push to make sure everyone checks that their sump pumps work and those pumps run outside instead of in the sanitary sewer, said city Wastewater Superintendent Dwight Zerr. The city's sewer system began backing up Tuesday, with more expected as the snow melts and ground thaws.

"We'll keep an eye on things, and hopefully we'll get over it soon," he said.

Residents are being asked to run their sump pumps outside, and that needs to happen as soon as possible, said Mayor Scott Hanlon. That will be the case, even if residents have to run their hoses over snow banks for now.

"You have a day and come Thursday morning, if these guys are picking up high water coming up, we will probably be coming to your house," Hanlon warned. "I hate to be like that, but we have to help our city guys out. It's really bad this year."

Spring garbage routes are also in effect.

Garbage will be picked up Tuesdays on Highway 37, Main Street, Sixth Street and Railroad Avenue.

Hanlon advised residents to be cautious with heavy vehicles.

"If you have any heavy traffic, keep it at a minimum because the roads are soft," he said. "Everything we can do to keep our roads in shape would be appreciated."

Economic development work ahead

Discussion of sewer back-ups brought forward the fact that more residential building would require improvements to the sewer system.

Every spring the city has trouble with excess water in the sewer system, and the current lift stations are going to need to be upgraded at some point, Zerr said. That will require a study to be done to see how big of a lift the city would require.

"It's going to have to be upgraded," he said. "There's no question."

Councilwoman Karyn Babcock asked if grant money is available, to which Hanlon replied the city needs to look into that.

Later in the City Council meeting, the group discussed next steps for economic development in the city.

The city is looking for a group to do a housing study, Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich told the council. He is waiting to hear from South Dakota Housing, a nonprofit entity committed to providing opportunities for quality, affordable housing for South Dakotans. If that group is unable to provide a housing study, private companies would be a much more expensive option.

While the city looks for options, Councilwoman Babcock suggested looking further into empty lots in town.

Road improvements on the way

Roadwork may begin soon as the council opened bids for street surfacing improvements.

Three bids were received for 62,000 square yards of resurfacing. One was from Bituminous Paving, Inc. that included \$3.65 per square yard and a total bid of \$226,300.

The Topkote Inc. bid was \$2.77 per square yard and a total bid of \$171,926.

The Road Guy Construction Company bid was \$2.81 per square yard and a total bid of \$174,220.

The council approved hiring Topkote Inc. for the project.

"I don't think we've had any problem with Topkote," Hanlon said.

Street Superintendent Terry Herron replied, "they've been doing it for years."

Signage changes for the police department

A new sign is in the works for the Groton Police Department.

A post on the Groton SD Community Facebook Page garnered comments saying the police department building didn't have appropriate signage.

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Councilman Brian Bahr brought cash and checks from community members to pay for a new sign at the building at 209 North Main Street. Those who donated said they don't want the money going into the city's general fund, but rather to the police department and specifically signage at the building.

The police department building just north of the post office previously also served as Groton City Hall and the library before the city offices and library moved to 120 North Main Street. Common Cents Thrift Store moved in to half of the old city building, while the police department retained the other half.

The donations Bahr delivered totaled \$905, which is more than what recent signage in town has cost, said Finance Officer Heinrich.

"We don't need fancy," said Mayor Hanlon. "We need something for people who can't see very good to be able to see it."

Bahr recommended the council get a few designs that include lights to be able to see the sign at night.

City moving further on baseball concession stand upgrade

The council authorized Finance Officer Heinrich to submit a grant application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for improvements at the Groton baseball complex.

The Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation compiled budget figures to build a new concession stand. The total budget estimate is \$222,371.23.

The grant the city is looking at could fund up to half of the project, with the rest of the funding being split between the city and foundation, Heinrich said. There's nothing in this fiscal year's budget set aside for the project.

"We could figure out a way to make it work," he added.

In other action:

- Three new members are joining the library board. Richal Wambach and Emily Sternhagen are joining the board as trustees for one-year terms. Ashley Dunham was appointed for a three-year term as a trustee. Becca Johnson, a trustee on the board, was moved up to vice president of the board. "It's good to get some new blood in and some new ideas," said Kellie Locke, assistant finance manager.

- Two more summer employees were hired on Tuesday. The new Under 10 softball coach is Reilly Furhman and the newest groundskeeper is Braxton Imrie.

- The council set wages for assistant part-time managers at the swimming pool at \$14 per hour. The council also established a \$25 bonus for private swimming lesson instructors for each five 30-minute sessions.

- The City Council approved renewing malt beverage licenses for MJ's Sinclair, Ken's Food Fair and Dollar General.

- The council also approved a special event alcohol beverage license for the Groton Fireman's Fun Night on April 22.

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Superintendent's Report to the Groton Area School District 06-6 Board of Education

April 10, 2023

SPRINGBoard Meetings. I've started a series of 11 small group staff meetings intending to gather staff perception of the strengths and weaknesses of our district in terms of both "student experience" and "employee experience." Additionally, we are gathering staff input on what they would find beneficial for professional development. Today was the fifth of those meetings which are scheduled to conclude on Tuesday, April 18.

These initial meetings and data gathering sessions will be followed up with an analysis of the findings with a district-wide small group and the establishment of a few goals or an action plan that can be implemented leading into next year.

"Discussions centered around honest assessment leading to focused and practical solutions to overcome obstacles will provide the best compression for our springboard into next year."

2022-2023 School Calendar. Until this week, we've seen eight consecutive weeks of school interrupted by inclement weather. Following last week's snow event, the District has had 15 snow days (no school), 7 late start days, and 2 early dismissal days. Calendar amendments made will provide for a total of nine makeup days (three within the initial calendar and six at the end of the school calendar). Hopefully, this is the final report on this issue for the 2023-24 school year.

South Dakota Department of Health Air Purifier Program. The South Dakota Department of Health (with implementation support from the Department of Education) is funding a program to provide classroom, office, and large space (e.g. libraries, etc) air purifiers and 2-3 years of replacement filters to accredited South Dakota Schools free of charge. I submitted our request last week to the Department of Education. It appears, at this time, that our request will be fulfilled at some point which should provide another layer of protection and a healthier environment for our students and staff.

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Brett Schwan

Elementary Principal

April 10, 2023

1. Enrollment

- a. JK: 21
- b. KG: 38 (-1)
- c. 1st: 44 (-1)
- d. 2nd: 42
- e. 3rd: 47
- f. 4th: 52
- g. 5th 39

2. **KG Roundup:** 40 students attended roundup last Friday. All students who had in our census were able to attend. We still encourage families to contact the school if they have a child who is turning 5 on or before September 1st.

- a. **2023-2024 KG Numbers:** 26 (additional 1 is on the fence) out of the 40 who attended roundup plan to enroll in KG. This would also include the 21 JK students we currently have. We also have 6 preschool students who may attend KG or JK. I anticipate at least having 50 or so students in KG next year.
- b. **2023-2024 JK Numbers:** 13 (additional 1 is on the fence) students who attended roundup plan to enroll in JK. We also have 6 preschool students who may attend KG or JK.

3. **Title I: Plans to Practice Workshop.** Ms. Schuring and I will be attending this Title 1 training. We will be reviewing our Schoolwide Plan as well as looking at our Parent Involvement Policies and procedures. Title I updates will also be discussed.

4. **Track and Field Day:** Our plan is to hold track and field day on Friday, May 12 starting at 12:30. We will once again have our "picnic" lunch. Lunch schedule:

KG and 1st – 11:00-11:25
2nd and 3rd – 11:25-11:50
4th and 5th – 11:50-12:15.

5. **Summer School/Connect 4Ed:** Last summer we ran summer school two days per week through the 2nd week of August with 3 staff members. This year we are looking to do the same but will end services at the end of July. Some of the funds used last year to provide a 3rd staff member were used with our ESSER funds. As of right now, Mrs. Zoellner, Mrs. Dinger, and Mrs. Erdmann will be teaching Connect 4Ed.

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Principal's Report

MS/HS Building

Dr. Sombke

April 10, 2023

1) Enrollment MS/HS Update

April 2023		April 2022	
6-	39	6-	43
7-	42	7-	47
8-	44	8-	37
MS=	125	MS=	127
9-	37	9-	46
10-	44	10-	48
11-	47	11-	42
12-	42	12-	39
HS=	170	HS=	175
Total=	295	Total=	302

2) Smarter Balance Testing Update- Smarter Balance Testing will continue this week with the following schedule. Due to weather and school cancellations last week, testing has been extended to April 19th and 20th as shown below.

Date	M (April 10)	T (11)	W (12)	Th (13)	F (14)
AM (hrs 1-3)	School in session	Grade 8 Science (during class periods) Tuesday thru Friday	Grade 11 Science (hrs 1-3)	Grade 7: ELA PT	
PM (hrs 5-7)			Grade 7: ELA CAT		

Date	M (April 17)	T (18)	W (19)	Th (20)	F (21)
Notes				Grade 6/8: ELA PT	
AM (hrs 1-3)				Grade 7/11: Math PT	
PM (hrs 5-7)			Grade 6/8: ELA CAT		
			Grade 7/11: Math CAT		

3) AFSP Presentation- The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention will again be coming to present to students in Grades 8-12 on May 9th. The presentation will cover the following items:

- What mental health is and how it's both similar to and different from, physical health
- How to notice signs of someone needing help
- Tips and strategies for having a caring conversation with someone they might be worried about
- Methods of self-care for mind, body, soul, and surroundings
- Examples of trustworthy resources
- How reaching out to trusted adults can help teens manage their mental health

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4) **2023 Prom and Information Packets-** Students in grades 11 and 12 can pick up the 2023 Prom Information Packets from the MS/HS Office on April 10th. Students will have two weeks to sign up for grand march and post prom by returning their completed packet with their \$20.00 per student or \$40.00 per couple payment. MS/HS PAC will again be sponsoring the post-prom event, busing students to Allevery in Aberdeen, in addition to providing drawings and prizes for all students who stay through the end of the post prom event. Students staying until the end of post prom will receive their Grand March/Prom fee back the following week.

5) Dates to Know

- 4/11- Track @ Groton Area
- 4/14- All School Play @ 7:00pm
- 4/14- Track @ NSU (new addition)
- 4/15- All School Play @ 4:00pm
- 4/16- State FFA Convention Begins SDSU
- 4/18- Track @ Britton
- 4/19- FCCLA Banquet @ 6:00pm
- 4/22- Prom Grand March @ 8:00pm
- 4/24- Golf/Girls @ Redfield
- 4/24- School Board Meeting @ 7:00pm
- 4/25- FFA Ag Fair/Aberdeen
- 4/25- Track @ Groton Area
- 4/27- Golf/Girls @ Milbank
- 4/27- Middle School Spring Music Concert @ 7:00pm
- 4/28- Track @ Webster
- 4/29- Middle School Band Contest Grades 6-8
- 5/2- Track @ Milbank
- 5/4- High School Spring Music Concert @ 7:00pm
- 5/4- Golf/Girls @ Aberdeen
- 5/5- Golf/Girls @ Clear Lake
- 5/5- Track @ Sisseton
- 5/6- Track @ Eureka
- 5/8- Golf @ Aberdeen
- 5/8- School Board Meeting @ 7:00pm
- 5/14- Groton Area Graduation @ 2:00pm
- 5/15- Golf/Girls @ Sisseton
- 5/25- End of 4th Quarter- Students Last Day of School (shortened day/dismiss at 12:15)
- 5/25- Golf/Girls @ Aberdeen
- 5/26- Teacher Inservice

Business Manager's Report April 10, 2023

SDASBO Spring Conference

Mrs. Hubsch and I will be attending SDASBO Spring Conference in Pierre on April 25-27. Relevant topics include School Nutrition Update with CANS staff, SD DOE update - Cody Stoesser and Rob Huffman, Department of Legislative – Rod Fortin, Legislative Update – Rodney Freeman, Software Unlimited Federal reporting – Linette Simpson, Human Resources Committee Roundtable, SD DOE Update – Bobbi Leiferman, and Keynote: "Something Greater is Always Possible" – Devin Henderson.

Budget process has begun

I have begun work on the 2023-24 budget with property valuation estimates and state levy amounts using an estimate of \$292,166 in new general fund revenue. Requisition data will be added soon with salary increases coming later. The May Preliminary Budget will reflect a capital outlay tax increase of \$100,000. This is necessary to fund future projects.

Local BM Training to Begin

Mrs. Hubsch and I are planning to meet after school as our schedules allow us to begin the new Business Manager training process. Once school is complete, we will meet every day through June 30.



Effective the week of April 10th, to help preserve our streets, Groton residents are asked to bring their garbage to the following locations until further notice:

- Railroad Avenue, Main Street, Sixth Street, & Highway 37
- Residents of the Broadway Mobile Home Park need to take their garbage to Highway 37.
- Residents north of 13th Avenue (Olson and Jacobson Development) need to bring their garbage to the Bus Barns.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Johnson mixes policy and politics in efforts to counter China

Congressman's focus on the issue brings him national attention

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - APRIL 11, 2023 8:23 PM

As tensions between the United States and China escalate, a congressman from South Dakota has edged into the national spotlight.

House leaders chose Republican Rep. Dusty Johnson in January to serve on the select committee on China – a panel of 24 members tasked with investigating China's influence on the American economy, national security and human rights.

Johnson, who's in the midst of his third two-year term, said "it's fair to say" he was awarded the seat partly because of his work on the security of American agriculture. That's something he's been focused on since at least mid-2022, following a report that a Chinese company bought land near Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota.

But as that news faded, so did some of the public interest in China.

However, after a large, white balloon from China entered American airspace earlier this year – just ahead of the select committee's first hearing – Johnson, by virtue of his membership on the committee and his other efforts to counteract Chinese influence, found himself in demand as a guest on national networks such as NBC, NPR and FOX Business.

"I guess the balloon situation was helpful insofar as it kind of galvanized American attention – it focused attention that the Chinese are trying to surveil us," Johnson told South Dakota Searchlight. "But the balloon is a tiny piece of a pattern of aggression that the Chinese Communist Party has had. It doesn't even make the top 100 list."

As the balloon has helped to focus attention on China, Johnson's positioning on China has focused attention on him in a way that an expert said could be politically advantageous.

Politics and policy

Mike Card is an emeritus political science professor at the University of South Dakota. He said championing policies to counter China is politically popular – especially with conservatives.

In his reelection campaigns, Johnson has faced two consecutive primary challengers who claimed to be



U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, questions witnesses in a hearing of the House Select Committee on Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, in the Cannon House Office Building on Feb. 28, 2023, in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Kevin Dietsch/

Getty Images)

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more conservative than him. The first of those challengers won 23 percent of the vote, and the second garnered 41 percent of the vote against Johnson last June.

Card said Johnson appears to be legitimately concerned about China's influence, but also about further primary challenges.

"And he's hit an issue that, for many South Dakotans, is a winner," Card said.

Johnson speaks often about China in media appearances, press releases and on social media.

"I fear that too many Americans view the Chinese Communist Party as a threat over there when in reality it is a threat here," Johnson told fellow members of the Select Committee on China on Feb. 28.

He describes China's increasing holdings of farmland and agricultural processing facilities around the globe as "part of a grand strategy" to increase its influence.

In response, Johnson wants the U.S. to do some grand-scale strategizing of its own. He wants American companies to carefully uproot vital supply chains and trade routes from China, and replant them in nations less hostile to the U.S.

"It is something we want to be focused, thoughtful, and deliberate about as we work to strategically decouple from the Chinese Communist Party," Johnson told the select committee.

Johnson told South Dakota Searchlight that he should not be interpreted as "anti-trade with China."

"This is not about pulling up the drawbridge and going full-on protectionist," Johnson said. However, he is against allowing China to have "undue control over items that are critical to national security."

"We need to pull our allies in the Indo-Pacific region closer," Johnson said. "If we want to strengthen supply chains, that comes from diversity, making sure we have a lot of different places we can buy things from."

Yet, Johnson has not supported every effort to counteract China. He voted against the CHIPS Act, which is intended to help the U.S. compete with other countries, particularly China, in the semiconductor industry and reduce reliance on foreign suppliers for critical components. The bill became law with President Biden's signature in August, authorizing billions in funding to support semiconductor research, design and manufacturing in the U.S.

Johnson said he voted against the bill because the price tag was too high to support.

While churning out a steady flow of rhetoric about China, Johnson has also supported China-focused bills and policy proposals.

In mid-2020, he co-sponsored the PASS Act, which stands for "Promoting Agriculture Safeguards and Security." The bill would prohibit China, Russia, Iran and North Korea from purchasing U.S. agricultural land and agricultural companies. He also co-sponsored the FARM Act, an acronym for Foreign Adversary Risk Management, in October 2021, adding language to the law to help protect the ag industry from foreign control.

Neither bill passed, but both have been reintroduced this year in the Senate.

Conservative vs. moderate

Johnson was sworn into the U.S. House of Representatives in January 2019 and joined the Problem Solvers Caucus soon after – a bipartisan group of representatives formed in 2017 with the goal of promoting bipartisanship and finding solutions to the country's most pressing issues.

He also chairs the Republican Main Street Caucus, focused on economic growth. In a story about Johnson's leadership of that group, the Capitol Hill publication Roll Call said Johnson "has positioned himself to be one of the GOP's biggest wheeler-dealers on the Hill."

When South Dakota Searchlight asked Johnson's staffers for a list of his top legislative accomplishments, they replied with a spreadsheet of bills he has sponsored, introduced, or served as the lead Republican on.

Seventeen have been enacted – sometimes administratively, while others were signed into law. Additionally, Johnson was recently rated among the most effective representatives in his party by the Center for Effective Lawmaking. He also had the center's highest rank among House Republicans on agricultural issues.

Despite those achievements, Mike Card said a policy-focused politician who is willing to compromise with Democrats as a member of the "Problem Solvers Caucus" is not what every Republican voter is looking for.

"He's trying to brand himself as someone who solves problems," Mike Card said. "That may cost him

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when there are so many people in the House of Representatives who want to shut the government down, rather than solve problems.”

Polling by South Dakota State University shows Johnson as the statewide politician with the highest percentage of positive feelings when the polling includes voters from across South Dakota’s political spectrum. When only Republican voters are included, his standing drops to third behind Gov. Kristi Noem and Sen. John Thune.

Nevertheless, Johnson has remained willing to call out what he sees as problems within his own party, including the tone of some political rhetoric.

“The allegation that you need to be angry or reflexive to be a true conservative is really out of line,” Johnson said. “I think conservatives are responsible and sensible.”

When Johnson took questions about his career recently during a visit to Wagner Community School, a student asked, “What was it like at the State of the Union?” Johnson said while he did not agree with a lot of what President Joe Biden said, he was also irritated with Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Georgia, who “rather than react in a responsible way, she got up and started screaming at him.”

Comments like that tend to get Johnson branded as a middle-of-the-road politician, but Card said Johnson is a conservative.

“To call Dusty a moderate, give me a break,” Card said.

And Johnson is quick to defend his conservative credentials.

“South Dakotans understand that a guy who is A+ rated by Right to Life, A+ rated by the NRA, who has a conservative score from Heritage Action, more conservative than the average House Republican, that’s an actual conservative,” Johnson said.

He has voted for repealing the Affordable Care Act and restricting access to abortion, against codifying gay and interracial marriage protections, and in favor of mining for copper at the Boundary Waters in Minnesota. He recently introduced a bill that would add more work requirements for participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

And despite voting against then-President Donald Trump’s emergency border wall declaration, Johnson generally supported Trump as president – even attending a Fourth of July celebration at Mount Rushmore with Trump and other elected officials during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, although Johnson was the only elected official who wore a mask on the stage.

Next for Johnson

State Rep. Will Mortenson, R-Pierre, is the majority leader of the state House and a friend of Johnson’s. The two met while Mortenson was interning at the legislative session in Pierre in 2009. Mortenson said he saw a leader that he, as a young Republican, could get behind. The young intern was so inspired by Johnson that he asked him out to lunch and “told him to run for Congress.”

Mortenson said while Johnson is proudly not a member of any fringe element, “He is a deeply conservative policy thinker. He just takes a South Dakota approach.”

Johnson told the students in Wagner he has no interest in being president.

“There is no shame in being a great shortstop in AAA minor league ball,” Johnson said. “You want to have a good awareness of what your limitations are.”

Though, “that’s not to say I wouldn’t run for anything else,” he added.

Johnson is 46 years old, and both of South Dakota’s U.S. senators are in their 60s. Mike Rounds is rumored to have hinted at interest in working closer to home, and John Thune said during his most recent campaign that he considered retirement before deciding to seek reelection.

Mike Card said if one or both senators were to leave their positions, Johnson would be a top contender to replace them. And the Senate isn’t the only place Johnson could turn to.

“In three years, Governor Noem will not be Governor Noem anymore,” Card said, referencing the term limits that will force Noem out of office.

That’s an idea Mortenson likes.

“Dusty should be our next governor,” Mortenson said. “Our state would only be so lucky.”

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Some of Rep. Dusty Johnson's legislative accomplishments, according to his staff:

A bill requiring the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish a cattle contract library, with the goal of bringing more price transparency to cattle markets. The bill's substance became law administratively.

A bill allowing farmers to collect insurance equal to the would-be harvest in an area experiencing excessive moisture, flood or drought. The bill's goals were implemented administratively.

A bill designating a post office in Rosebud as the "Ben Reifel Post Office Building," in honor of the late Ben Reifel, who was the first Lakota person elected to Congress. The bill was signed into law.

A bill allowing tribally controlled grant schools to participate in the Federal Employee Health Benefits program. The bill was signed into law.

A bill requiring the USDA to reduce the fees charged to small meat, poultry and egg processing plants for inspections that occur during overtime hours or on holidays. It also provides funding to implement the requirements. The bill's substance became law administratively.

A bill transferring some federal land to the state at the Gilt Edge Mine Superfund site to facilitate easier management of the ongoing cleanup at the abandoned former gold mine. The bill was signed into law.

A bill allowing states, tribes, territories and localities to use some COVID-19 relief funds for natural disasters and infrastructure projects. The bill was signed into law.

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Former legislative candidate sentenced to 10 years for incest

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - APRIL 11, 2023 2:33 PM

Former legislative candidate Joel Koskan was sentenced to 10 years in state prison on Tuesday after pleading guilty to two felony counts of incest, according to the Attorney General's Office.

The charges stemmed from sexual activity with an adopted child. Charges were filed against Koskan in November, just days before the general election in which he was running as a Republican for a state Senate seat. Koskan, from the rural community of Wood in Mellette County, lost the race but received 42 percent of the votes cast.

Attorney General Marty Jackley praised the victim for showing courage and the investigators and prosecutors for their work.

"Justice has been served in this case because the victim overcame extraordinary conditions to cooperate with the prosecution," Jackley said in a news release.

Circuit Court Judge Margo Northrup accepted Koskan's guilty plea Tuesday in a Hughes County courtroom in Pierre. Koskan waived his right to a delay in his sentencing and was immediately sentenced. In addition to the prison time, he was ordered to pay more than \$20,000 in fines.

Federal agencies lag in registering voters despite Biden executive order, advocates say

SD secretary of state among 15 asking for reversal of order

BY: ZACHARY ROTH - APRIL 11, 2023 12:29 PM

Within weeks of taking office in 2021, President Joe Biden issued an executive order — hailed by voter advocates as potentially transformative — that for the first time committed the U.S. government to registering new voters at federal agencies.

But just over two years later, most of the 10 agencies examined in a recent report had made only minimal progress toward meeting the order's goals. That's raising concerns that, without urgent action, the administration could squander a rare chance to leverage the reach of the federal government, the nation's largest employer, to expand access to the ballot.

"We want them to do this more quickly, and make it more of a priority," said Leslie Proll, a senior director of the voting rights program at the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, which led the coalition that produced the report. "It is going to take time — we're just trying to stress the urgency around this, because it's so meaningful."

Biden's Executive Order on Promoting Accessing to Voting could provide a huge jolt to registration rates if carried out effectively.

The report's authors, a broad coalition of voting and civil rights groups, as well as other progressive organizations, estimate that if every federal agency created a "high-quality" opportunity for people to register, as the order urges them to do, they could collectively add around 3.5 million new voters to the rolls each year, or around 7 million every election cycle.

That would represent over 20% of all new registrations that occurred during the 2019-2020 cycle, the most recent for which figures exist.

There are symbolic reasons, too, why the order's impact could be far-reaching. By declaring that "it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to expand access to, and education about, voter registration," it for the first time brings the U.S. government meaningfully into the voter registration process and sets down a marker for the future.

The order also represents an attempt by the Biden administration to push back against efforts in Republican-led states to erect barriers to voting, using one of the few levers it has at a time when major voting legislation has been stymied in Congress.

But time may be running out to realize the order's full promise. The upcoming presidential election could make any progress, which in some areas requires working with state election officials, difficult next year. And by 2025, the government could be in the hands of a new administration that pulls back on enforcing the order or rescinds it outright.

In a series of letters sent to the Biden administration last year, U.S. House Republicans questioned whether federal agencies have the constitutional and legal authority to conduct voter registration, and they have signaled they plan to use control of the House to intensify that probe.

And in August, 15 Republican secretaries of state — including those for Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Tennessee — sent a letter of their own to the White House, asking Biden to reverse the order, which, they said, "will produce duplicate registrations, confuse citizens, and complicate the jobs of our county clerks and election officials."

'Missing a huge opportunity'

But a bigger problem than Republican opposition, advocates say, has been the relatively slow pace at which some agencies have implemented the order.

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 transformed the registration process in the U.S. By requiring that state motor vehicle departments and public assistance agencies offer customers the chance to register to vote, the NVRA, sometimes known as "Motor Voter," made getting on the rolls much easier and more convenient, especially for low-income people and racial minorities.

In the 2019-20 election cycle, nearly 40 percent of all voter registrations happened at motor vehicle

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departments, making it the most common registration method.

Biden's order aimed to extend the logic of Motor Voter to the federal government. It directed federal agencies to come up with ways to expand Americans' opportunities to register to vote, including by considering how to offer voter registration "in the course of activities or services that directly engage with the public" — just as motor vehicle departments offer voter registration to people obtaining or renewing a driver's license.

And it contained specific provisions aimed at increasing access to registration among non-English speakers, veterans, Native Americans, people in federal prisons and other groups that are under-represented in the political process.

"Make no mistake, this is designed to get at low-income people and marginalized communities who are using (Veterans Affairs) services, healthcare.gov, naturalization ceremonies," said Proll. "By the very nature of the work of the agency, you're going to capture people who are otherwise not participating in the work of democracy."

Some agencies receive high marks in the report. The Department of the Interior and the Department of Veterans Affairs both win praise for taking steps to designate some of their offices as official voter registration agencies under the NVRA, a designation that advocates say can help improve their effectiveness at registering voters.

And the Department of the Treasury has reached millions of people by adding information on voter registration to the taxpaying process.

By contrast, the Department of Education, which has contact with millions of young people through its student loan program, is said to be "missing a huge opportunity" by not including information about registration in the Student Aid Report, which students receive after applying for federal student loans. Around 18 million students, disproportionately non-white, applied for loans in the 2020-21 application cycle.

Shortly after the advocacy report came out, the department updated StudentAid.gov, which serves as an entry point for people looking into the student loan process, by adding a link to vote.gov, the federal government's voter registration portal. But the linked text is in tiny font at the very bottom of the page, with no additional text to draw attention to it.

Advocates say that won't get the same results as adding a link to the Student Aid Report. People read the SAR much more closely, since they've applied to receive it, and it contains specific, tailored information about what types of loans are available to them.

This kind of "active" outreach, voter registration experts say, which targets people who already are likely to be invested in the interaction, and which explicitly asks them whether they want to register, is much more effective than the kind of "passive" outreach typified by adding a link at the bottom of a homepage.

Laura Williamson, one of the report's authors and the associate director of democracy at Demos, which works to expand access to voting and democracy, called the department's move to add the link to StudentAid.gov "better than nothing — but not by much."

"Even more concerning," according to the report, is the department's failure to date to fulfill a pledge, made in response to the order, to produce a toolkit with detailed guidance for colleges and universities on the most effective ways to offer voter registration. (The department did send a letter reminding schools that they're required under the Higher Education Act to help students register, which advocates say was effective in beefing up compliance with the law.)

A spokesperson for the Department of Education did not respond to a request for comment.

Other agencies lagging

Of course, if the administration is sending people to vote.gov, it's crucial that the site, which links visitors to state-specific registration information, is easy to use for everyone. The General Services Administration has made "modest progress" in improving vote.gov for people with disabilities and those who don't speak English, according to the report, but "still has a long way to go."

A fact sheet issued by the White House last month, days after the report appeared, noted that the site "is now accessible in twelve languages, with more translations coming online soon," and pledged that GSA

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would continue working to improve it.

Proll stressed it's important that the administration do more to make vote.gov a true "one-stop-shop" for registration. "I really view that as a centerpiece of this effort," she said.

Also falling short, according to the report, is the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service, which through its naturalization program has direct and meaningful contact with hundreds of thousands of eligible but unregistered new citizens each year.

USCIS did send its 88 field offices a short letter reminding them of its existing policy — followed by some offices more than others — of inviting representatives from state and local government or nonprofit groups to register voters after naturalization ceremonies. But that alone "will not be nearly enough" to reach the order's goals, according to the report.

In its fact sheet, the White House pledged that USCIS would go further, issuing new policy guidance to field offices, "including providing a clear roadmap for how to successfully partner with state and local election administration officials and nonpartisan organizations" to help new citizens register.

Advocates say new policy guidance would be a step in the right direction, but still might not be sufficient.

"I probably would have been seeking more," said Justin Levitt, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, who played a role in implementing the order when he served as White House senior policy advisor for democracy and voting rights. "It remains to be seen what the guidance is, and how forceful it is. There's certainly more that USCIS could do." (Levitt stressed that he was not speaking for the White House, which he left in December.)

Other agencies made stronger commitments, but have so far not done enough to meet them, advocates say. The Department of Health and Human Services pledged that its Administration for Community Living would connect seniors and people with disabilities to information on voter registration. It did launch a voting access hub, but it isn't clear how users would find the page, which isn't linked from ACL's homepage.

Even more significantly, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services promised to make it easier for the more than 8 million users of the federal health care exchange, healthcare.gov, to connect to voter registration services, which the report says would be a "transformative step." But progress toward this goal, it finds, has been "very slow-moving."

CMS, which is part of the Department of Health and Human Services, says it's already helping people connect to registration services.

"After consumers apply for coverage, the Marketplace includes a callout about registering to vote if they need to and provides links to official resources from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission," a CMS spokesperson said in a statement.

The spokesperson added that the agency is working to ensure that voter registration services are more accessible to users of healthcare.gov, including by expanding the locations on the site that connect to vote.gov without needing to be logged in.

But Williamson, of Demos, said that's not reassuring.

"If anything, it makes us more worried that CMS and HHS might miss this tremendous opportunity altogether," Williamson said. "Dropping a link to vote.gov or the EAC's website at the end of a long application process, or in small font at the bottom of a page full of information, is not providing meaningful access to voter registration opportunities."

The issue of how much the health care exchanges should do to help people register to vote has flared before. After the Affordable Care Act went into effect in 2013, Republicans expressed outrage that the law might help boost voter registration. The Obama administration ultimately made the registration opportunity so unobtrusive and ineffective that Demos charged it was violating the NVRA.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons, too, made an "exemplary" commitment to facilitate voting for people in federal prisons who remain eligible to vote in their home state, the report found, creating a plan that would "significantly increase voting access" for this population.

But though BOP, which is part of the Department of Justice, has "issued some helpful materials," it has been "very slow" to implement its pledge, according to the authors.

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Donald Murphy, a BOP spokesman, noted several steps the agency has taken on voting, including developing a lesson plan, "Know Your Voting Rights," that's provided to all incoming inmates.

Also being urged to do more is the Indian Health Service, which provides health care to Native Americans, a group that has long faced some of the most powerful systemic barriers to voting. The report criticized IHS, which is part of HHS, for showing "no signs of follow-through" on a pledge to provide registration services at agency facilities, which advocates say could significantly increase access for Native populations.

But the White House fact sheet that appeared days after the report committed the agency to creating "high-quality" voter registration pilot programs at five IHS offices by the end of the year — which advocates said would be a major step forward.

Agencies exercise new muscles

Another key area where advocates want to see the administration move faster is in getting federal agencies officially designated as voter registration agencies under the NVRA.

The designation, which agencies work with the state in which they're located to gain, can improve registration services by providing training for staff and tracking of registration rates, among other benefits. But when Biden took office, no federal agency had ever received the designation.

Biden's order aimed to prod agencies into action by urging them to accept NVRA designation from states, sending the message that they're expected to begin working toward being designated. But over two years later, only Interior and Veterans Affairs have made real progress.

Interior has completed the designation process for two Native American universities it controls, one in Kansas and one in New Mexico, while the VA is working with Kentucky, Michigan, and Pennsylvania to designate several medical facilities in those states.

The Small Business Administration is said to be working with several states on designation, though things appear less far along.

Because the process is new for both federal agencies and states, it's not a shock that things have moved slowly, advocates say. But they add that now is the time to pick up the pace.

"We have been a little disappointed because we have not had much success in this space," said Sarah Brannon, managing attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union's voting rights project, and another co-author of the report. "We are hoping that in the next year, more is going to be accomplished than has been accomplished in the last year."

Still, the designations already completed, as well as those in the works, are likely to be important in offering a model that spurs other agencies to follow.

"Every single one of these designations represents new muscles that agencies are learning to exercise," said Levitt, the former White House official. "I, too, would like more new muscles faster. But the power of (offering) proof-of-concept, to show, 'Hey, this isn't hard; hey, it works, it's pretty smooth,' is tremendous in getting long-term healthier results."

More broadly, Levitt added, by integrating registration opportunities into different services that a diverse range of people already receive, the administration-wide response to Biden's order has offered a powerful example of effective government — one that can help bolster faith in democracy.

"This is a program that has benefited members of tribal nations, it has benefited veterans, it has benefited taxpayers, it has benefited community health patients, it has benefited people who speak languages other than English all over the country, it has benefited members of the military, it has benefited people with convictions who are involved in the justice system, it has benefited people getting passports, and on and on and on," Levitt said.

"And it's easy to lose the field in the details. But it really has been an all-out government effort, and I don't think anyone believes it should rest where it is."

Williamson, of Demos, said fully accomplishing the goals of the order is part of fulfilling a fundamental duty owed by government to citizens. (Of course, it's a duty that often still goes unrecognized.)

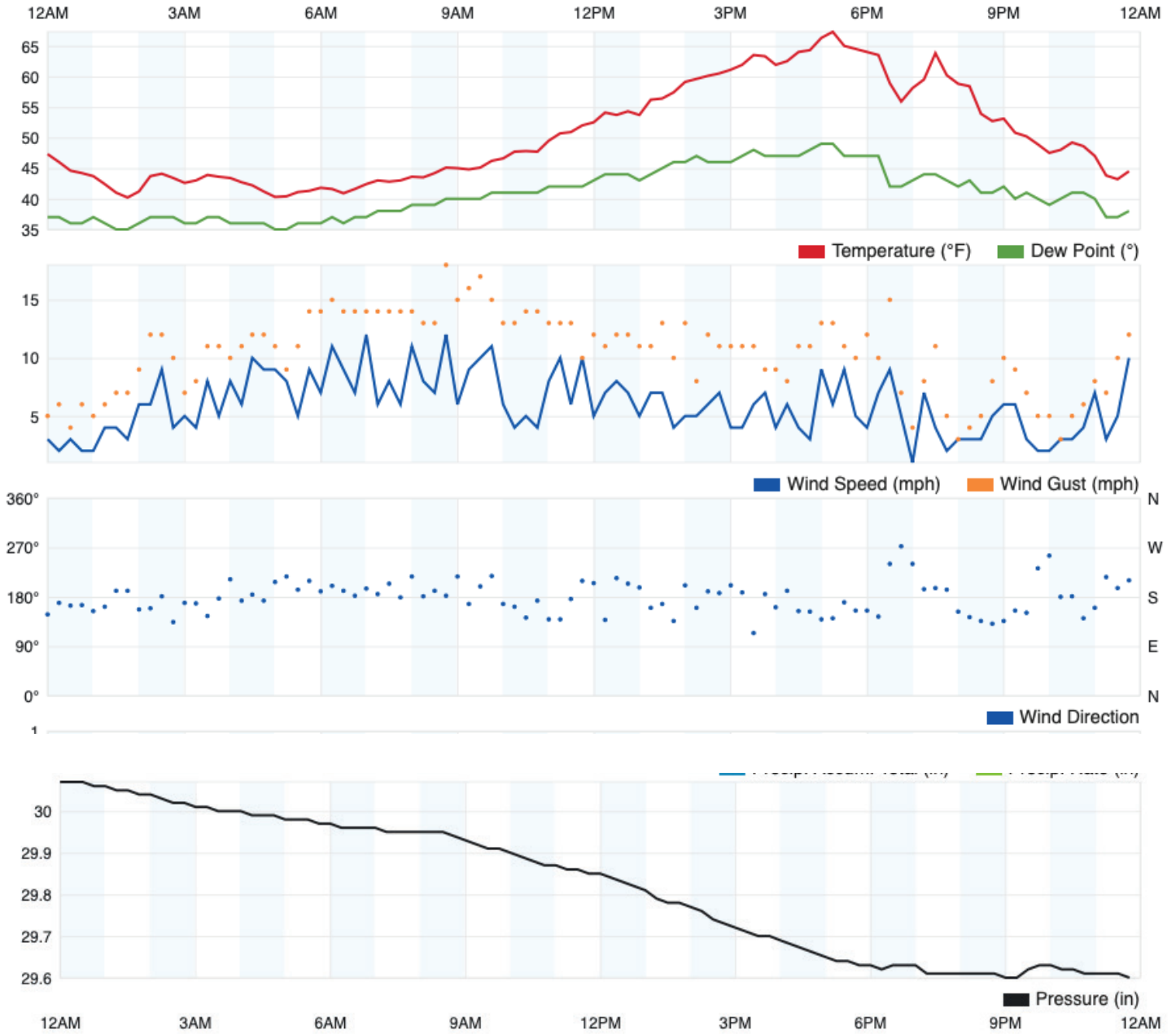
"We are a developed democracy, and in a developed democracy the government has a responsibility to make sure all its eligible people are registered and can vote," Williamson said. "This is the right thing to do in a democracy that's committed to full enfranchisement for all eligible people."

Zachary Roth is the National Democracy Reporter for States Newsroom.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Sunny	Increasing Clouds	Slight Chance Rain then Mostly Cloudy	Chance T-storms and Breezy then Rain Likely	Chance Rain	Chance Rain and Blustery	Slight Chance Rain and Breezy
High: 51 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 47 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 44 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 42 °F



Today

Mostly Clear Skies

Highs: 50 - 80°F
(coolest in snow covered areas)

Tonight

Increasing Clouds

Lows: 35 - 43°F

Thursday

Mostly Cloudy, Slight Chance of Showers in the Morning in the North

Highs: 45 - 74°F

April 12, 2023 3:57 AM

A cold front will move through this morning bringing cooler but seasonable temperatures today. This will be the start of a cooling trend that will continue into the weekend. Another system will bring rain and thunderstorms Thursday evening through Friday night.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 68 °F at 5:09 PM

Low Temp: 40 °F at 1:47 AM

Wind: 18 mph at 8:43 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 25 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 85 in 1931

Record Low: 9 in 1961

Average High: 56

Average Low: 30

Average Precip in April.: 0.56

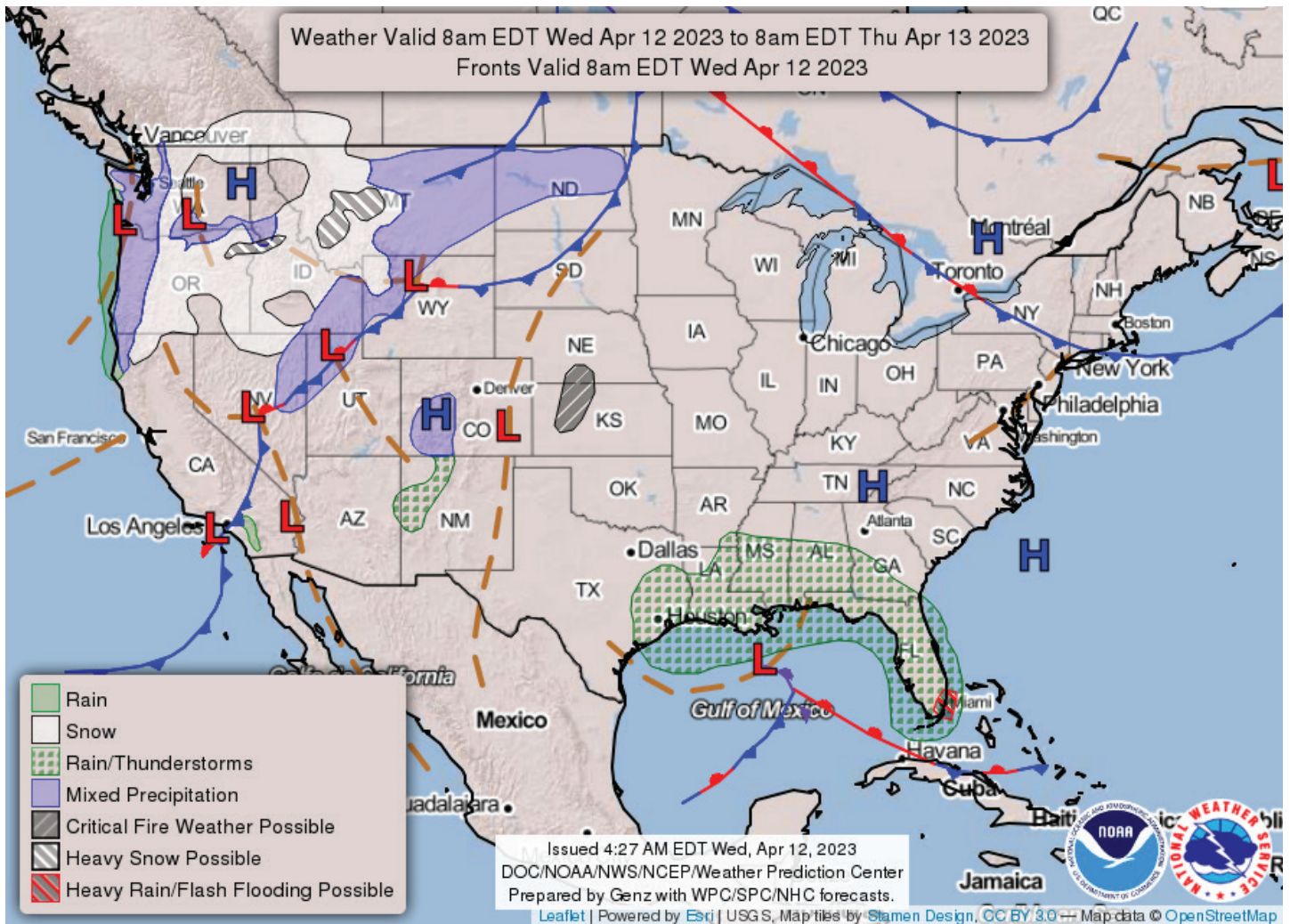
Precip to date in April.: 0.48

Average Precip to date: 2.62

Precip Year to Date: 4.41

Sunset Tonight: 8:15:46 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:48:47 AM



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Today in Weather History

April 12, 1970: A strong spring storm affected the northern and western two-thirds of South Dakota. Heavy snow fell throughout the morning hours dumping over a foot of snow over a large area of the state. Winds whipped the snow into 2 to 4-foot drifts across much of northern South Dakota. The Aberdeen area was the hardest hit with around 17 inches reported. While southeast South Dakota, southwest Minnesota, and northwest Iowa did not feel the effects of the storm, east-central South Dakota was not as fortunate. Freezing drizzle and freezing rain resulted in heavy icing in east central South Dakota causing extensive damage. The ice storm caused power outages to 20 to 80% of the rural electric service in the area.

1927: A tornado wiped out the town of Rock Springs Texas, killing 72 persons and causing 1.2 million dollars damage. The tornado was more than one mile in width and destroyed 235 of 247 buildings, leaving no trace of lumber or contents in many cases. Many survivors were bruised by large hail that fell after the passage of the tornado.

1934: Winds atop Mount Washington New Hampshire, averaged 186 mph for five minutes, with a peak gust of 231 mph, the highest wind speed ever clocked in the world at that time. In a report released by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), that record was toppled in 1996 at Barrow Island, Australia during Typhoon Olivia. The new world record is now 253 mph. The 316 mph wind speed recorded at Moore, Oklahoma on 5/3/1999 logged during an F5 tornado was not recorded at ground level.

1945: A series of significant tornadoes raked Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, and Illinois. Antlers, Oklahoma were nearly obliterated by a massive F5 tornado that zigzagged from southwest to northeast across the town. 69 people died in the twister. Another tornado killed eight people in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The disaster was overshadowed by the loss of President Franklin Roosevelt, who died suddenly at his vacation home at Warm Springs, Georgia.

1987 - A cold front crossing the central U.S. produced heavy snow in the Central Rockies, and severe thunderstorms over Kansas and Oklahoma. Snowfall totals ranged up to 16 inches at Red Mountain Pass CO. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 87 mph at Ponca City OK. Winds associated with the cold front itself gusted to 69 mph at Tucumcari NM. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Snow blanketed the Southern Appalachians. Totals in North Carolina ranged up to 17 inches at Mitchell. Winds at Flat Top Mountain gusted to 80 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty-two cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Elkins WV with a low of 15 degrees, and Baton Rouge LA with a reading of 37 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Arctic air invaded the central U.S. Lincoln, NE, reported a record low of 17 degrees. Thunderstorms developing along the arctic cold front produced heavy snow in north central Kansas, wind gusts to 61 mph at Midland TX, and wind gusts to 69 mph at Rawlins WY. Warm weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. Las Vegas NV reported a record high of 91 degrees, and on the 13th, Sacramento CA reported a record high of 95 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2010 - One-inch diameter hail falls in Fresno, CA. Two condominiums are destroyed by thunderstorms in California's San Joaquin Valley. Up to three funnel clouds were also seen in the region.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE SOURCE OF OUR TROUBLES

Charlie Brown was sitting on a rock with his head in his hands and his elbows on his knees. Linus seeing such a sad sight said, "Charlie Brown, do you want to know what the trouble is with you?"

"No," he answered.

Continuing, Linus said, "The trouble with you is that you don't want to know what the trouble with you is!"

That's the trouble with many of us. We really do not want to see ourselves as we are or as God sees us. He has established spiritual goals for us to achieve, and unless we are willing to see ourselves as he sees us - as we actually are - and how He would have us to be and live, we will not see our "troubles."

Moses warned Israel that God required them "to fear the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to love Him, (and) to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and to keep His commandments."

How fortunate we are that God lets us know the expectations He has for us. He has clearly and carefully described the standards and conditions for His children to follow.

There are no surprises, no hidden agendas, and no games. He is a loving God and wants us to know how He wants us to live. But, we must want to know. And, if we do want to know, we can find His ways in His Word, and then ask Him: "What is the trouble with us is?"

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for Your Word. May we study it carefully, live it consistently, and be committed to making You known. May our lives prove our love for You! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: He requires only that you fear the LORD your God, and live in a way that pleases him, and love him and serve him with all your heart and soul. And you must always obey the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good. Deuteronomy 10:12-16



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.11.23

31 35 53 54 55 24

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$476,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 37
DRAW: Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.10.23

3 10 12 15 37 2

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,200,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 37 Mins 33
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.11.23

1 5 9 33 47 16

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 7 Mins 33
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.08.23

8 9 18 27 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$23,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 37 Mins 33
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.10.23

6 14 20 24 63 2

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 36 Mins 33
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.10.23

9 10 36 46 52 14

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$202,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 36 Mins 33
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Musk says owning Twitter 'painful' but needed to be done

LONDON (AP) — Billionaire Elon Musk has told the BBC that running Twitter has been “quite painful” but that the social media company is now roughly breaking even after he acquired it late last year.

In an interview also streamed live late Tuesday on Twitter Spaces, Musk discussed his ownership of the online platform, including layoffs, misinformation and his work style.

“It’s not been boring. It’s quite a rollercoaster,” he told the U.K. broadcaster at Twitter’s San Francisco headquarters.

It was a rare chance for a mainstream news outlet to interview Musk, who also owns Tesla and SpaceX. After buying Twitter for \$44 billion last year, Musk’s changes included eliminating the company’s communications department.

Reporters who email the company to seek comment now receive an auto-reply with a poop emoji.

The interview was sometimes tense, with Musk challenging the reporter to back up assertions about rising levels of hate speech on the platform. At other times, Musk laughed at his own jokes, mentioning more than once that he wasn’t the CEO but his dog Floki was.

He also revealed that he sometimes sleeps on a couch at Twitter’s San Francisco office.

Advertisers who had shunned the platform in the wake of Musk’s tumultuous acquisition have mostly returned, the billionaire said, without providing details.

Musk predicted that Twitter could become “cash flow positive” in the current quarter “if current trends continue.” Because Twitter is a private company, information about its finances can’t be verified.

After acquiring the platform, Musk carried out mass layoffs as part of cost-cutting efforts. He said Twitter’s workforce has been slashed to about 1,500 employees from about 8,000 previously, describing it as something that had to be done.

“It’s not fun at all,” Musk said. “The company’s going to go bankrupt if we don’t cut costs immediately. This is not a caring-uncaring situation. It’s like if the whole ship sinks, then nobody’s got a job.”

Asked if he regretted buying the company, he said it was something that “needed to be done.”

“The pain level of Twitter has been extremely high. This hasn’t been some sort of party,” Musk said.

Jeremy Renner attends premiere, months after snowplow crush

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jeremy Renner attended the premiere for his new series Tuesday, capping a remarkable recovery less than four months after the “Avengers” star was nearly killed in a snowplow accident.

Renner was surrounded by family and supporters at the “Rennervations” premiere in Los Angeles, where he posed for photos and did interviews, at times making use of a cane and a knee scooter. At one point he flashed photographers a thumbs up sign while moving down the carpet.

Renner was crushed by his 7-ton snowplow on New Year’s Day while trying to help free a relative’s car at his Nevada home. The actor has said he broke numerous bones and suffered a collapsed lung and pierced liver in the accident.

“Rennervations,” which premieres on Disney+ on Wednesday, follows Renner as he transforms large vehicles into community spaces for young people in India, Mexico, Chicago and Nevada. The purposes range from serving as a mobile music studio to a water filtration truck for a community in India.

Renner said his aim was to give young people access to things they might not already have and present opportunities they might not know existed.

Renner wrote the theme song for the show, something he did while working on another show.

“I use music and piano to write songs and use it like therapy for me,” he said.

Construction and music have been creative outlets for Renner, who is best known for playing the superhero Hawkeye in the Marvel “Avengers” films and his own spin-off TV series.

Marvel co-star Anthony Mackie appears in the show, and Renner said the secret to their friendship is

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they “laugh a lot.”

Renner, a two-time Oscar nominee, told Diane Sawyer in an interview that aired that while he thought he might die from his injuries, he refused to be “haunted” by the accident.

Associated Press writer Leslie Ambriz contributed to this report.

US names veterinary drug, fentanyl mixture ‘emerging threat’

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

The U.S. has named a veterinary tranquilizer as an “emerging threat” when it’s mixed with the powerful opioid fentanyl, clearing the way for more efforts to stop the spread of xylazine.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy announced the designation Wednesday, the first time the office has used it since the category for fast-growing drug dangers was created in 2019.

Dr. Rahul Gupta, director of the drug policy office, said xylazine (pronounced ZAI’-luh-zeen) has become increasingly common in all regions of the country.

It was detected in about 800 drug deaths in the U.S. in 2020 — most of them in the Northeast. By 2021, it was present in more than 3,000 fatalities —with the most in the South — according to a report last year from the Drug Enforcement Administration.

“We cannot ignore what we’re seeing,” Gupta said. “We must act and act now.”

Xylazine was approved for veterinary use in 1971. Sometimes known as “tranq,” it’s been showing up in supplies of illicit drugs used by humans in major quantities in only the last several years.

It’s believed to be added to other drugs to increase profits. Officials are trying to understand how much of it is diverted from veterinary uses and how much is made illicitly.

The drug causes breathing and heart rates to slow down, sometimes to deadly levels, and causes skin abscesses and ulcers that can require amputation. Withdrawal is also painful.

While it’s often used in conjunction with opioids, including fentanyl and related illicit lab-made drugs, it’s not an opioid. And there are no known antidotes.

Gupta said his office is requesting \$11 million as part of its budget to develop a strategy to tackle the drug’s spread. Plans include developing an antidote, learning more about how it is introduced into illicit drug supplies so that can be disrupted, and looking into whether Congress should classify it as a controlled substance.

Gupta said it needs to be available for veterinary uses even amid crackdowns on the supply used by people. He also said systems to detect the drug and data about where it’s being used need to be improved.

The drug is part of a deepening overdose crisis in the U.S.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than 107,000 people died from overdoses in the 12 months that ended Oct. 31, 2022. Before 2020, the number of overdose deaths had never topped 100,000.

Most of the deaths were linked to fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. Like xylazine, they’re often added to other drugs — and users don’t always know they’re getting them.

In Kerala, an aging trend bucks India’s booming population

By SIBI ARASU Associated Press

KOCHI, India (AP) — When 82-year-old Vasanthi Baby almost tripped while climbing down the stairs in her home in southern India’s Kerala state, she decided, along with her 84-year-old husband V. Baby, to move to an assisted living center.

The couple are two of a growing number of people in India’s only aging state that are moving into specialized facilities. They’re happy with the care they receive: round-the-clock access to nurses, the reassuring company of their own generation and healthy, regular meals.

“There is a feeling of safety we can only get here,” V. Baby said. “We cannot get this at home.”

Like millions of others in the region, Baby, a retired math professor, spent his life savings building a two-

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floor multi-bedroom home. It was meant to last generations: their son Sony was supposed to have and grow his family here, but he emigrated to the United Arab Emirates for work and a better quality of life.

In the past 60 years, the percentage of people age 60 and over in Kerala has shot up from 5.1% to 16.5% — the highest proportion in any Indian state. This makes Kerala an outlier in a country with a rapidly growing population, soon to be the world's most populous at 1.4 billion. India has a booming workforce and young population, but language barriers, climate threats, minimal federal provisions and an increasing desire among younger people like Sony to live elsewhere put the state's older people in a precarious position.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story is part of an ongoing series exploring what it means for the 1.4 billion inhabitants of India to live in what will soon be the world's most populated country.

The country's population has more than quadrupled since its independence from colonial rule 75 years ago. But the world's largest democracy remains, in many ways, two countries: a place that is both urban and rural, modern and pre-industrial, opulent and impoverished. For older people, where they fall on the divide determines how they'll live out their autumn years.

Just 20 kilometers away (12 miles) from the assisted living center, in the Mattancherry neighborhood of Kerala's financial capital Kochi, 65-year-old Zainaba Ali lives in a small room with an asbestos roof in a corner of her daughter's house.

Ali spent most of her youth working in the countries around the Middle East as a cleaner but has little savings to show for it. After developing arthritis and a slew of other health conditions making her unable to work, she returned to India.

"I receive a small pension from the government but that hasn't come through in months. I survive on the goodwill of my children," Ali said. Her daughter doesn't work and her son is a daily wage laborer. "Even buying medicines has become difficult now."

In India, people over 60 are entitled to a state pension of roughly 1,600 rupees (\$20) a month, usually not enough for basic necessities. It means that many older people rely on their children if they are no longer able to work and don't have enough saved up. In Kerala, where there are over 4.2 million elderly people, it can be tough on families' finances.

Flooding and heat waves, both made worse by human-caused climate change, adds to the vulnerability of Kerala's older people, said Anjal Prakash, a research director at the Indian School of Business.

Kochi in particular has been bearing the brunt of the damages. A disastrous flood in 2018 sunk large parts of the city. The summer months are getting hotter and longer and rains are becoming more erratic and concentrated.

"During monsoons we need to hold open umbrellas inside the house," Ali said, pointing to buckets kept in various corners of the house. "Summer has become absolutely unbearable. Because of the scorching sun, we often go to the seashore seeking a bit of shade. Inside here the fan does not even run properly."

Prakash said specific measures to look after older people who have their own needs and vulnerabilities is a "dark spot" in climate policy.

"Understanding the specific needs of seniors is the first step in protecting them. ... People are not trained to rescue older people and children," he said.

The movement of younger people away from the state also means fewer people to care for their older relatives.

Poonam Muttreja, the executive director of the New Delhi-based Population Foundation of India, pointed to a steady stream of outward migration from Kerala for at least 50 years. In the 1960s and 1970s, "there was a huge migration to the Middle East, eastern Africa." Many went to other countries as school teachers or nurses, a trend that's continued in more recent times, now also to Europe and north America, she said.

The aging population, combined with the migration of younger generations, means there will be 35 people over 60 in the state for every 100 working-age people by 2030, according to the Kerala government. It

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means more specialized care facilities would be needed, with enough workers to staff them.

"Getting qualified employees is a big challenge today and bringing people from other states doesn't always work because of language barriers," said Alex Joseph, the managing trustee of Signature Homes, the assisted living center where the Babys reside. Joseph added that getting staff from within Kerala is also difficult since most of them aspire to migrate abroad for work.

"Kerala probably sends out more nurses to the rest of the world than any other single region in India or elsewhere. To get them to stay here and work here for long periods is extremely difficult," he said.

The state's unique demographics in India are due to declining fertility and increasing life expectancies as a result of statewide policies. Since the state was formed in 1956, Kerala prioritized social welfare and invested heavily in public health and education.

It paid off: Kerala's literacy rate is 93% compared to India's 75%. It's also the only state in India to have a maternal mortality rate that is less than one for every 100,000 live births.

In other parts of India, especially in poorer regions in the north, states have a larger population, higher levels of corruption and other factors that cause them to lag behind in health and education, Muttreja said.

But like Kerala, "southern Indian states have lower fertility rates because they invested in literacy, health infrastructure and family planning," said Muttreja. She estimated that states like southern Tamil Nadu could also see Kerala-like trends in the long and medium term.

Although that's good news for most younger working people, it can be tough on older generations.

Despite his cheerful demeanor, Baby admits he misses his son but agrees there is a better life to be had elsewhere.

"I cannot ask him to stay here," he said.

As Ukraine war drags on, civilians' mental health needs rise

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

KRAMATORSK, Ukraine (AP) — Huddled in the back of a café near the train station where a missile killed dozens of people a year ago, Nastya took slow, deliberate breaths to calm herself. Overnight, her neighborhood had been bombed again, and she just couldn't take any more.

Heeding her parents' advice, the 20-year-old woman had visited the nearby psychiatric hospital that morning — a place that also bore the scars of war after being repeatedly bombed, including by a missile that destroyed part of the building last September. But the staff swept up the shattered glass, shoveled away the debris and carried on working, determined to stay in Kramatorsk, in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, to help those in need.

For Nastya, it was a lifeline.

"After today's shelling, I could no longer cope with anxiety, the feeling of constant danger," the speech therapy student said, giving only her first name to talk last month about the difficult decision to seek mental health care. The stigma of Soviet-era psychiatry, when dissidents were incarcerated in psychiatric institutions as a form of punishment, still lingers.

"I just realized that my psychological health is much more important," she said.

There are hundreds of thousands like Nastya in Ukraine, experts say, and the number of people needing psychological help is only expected to rise as the war continues. In December, the World Health Organization said one in five people in countries that have experienced conflict in the past decade will suffer from a mental health condition, and estimated that about 9.6 million people in Ukraine could be affected.

Russia's invasion in February 2022 resulted in millions of people being displaced, bereaved, forced into basements for months due to incessant shelling or enduring harrowing journeys from Russian-occupied regions.

For Nastya, as for so many, the war changed everything overnight. There is a before — a life of simple pleasures, of going for coffee and laughing with friends. And an after.

"You wake up with the feeling that you are just surrounded by horrors, anxieties, surrounded by constant air raid sirens, flying planes, helicopters," she said. "You're simply in a closed circle which is not filled with

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the happy times of before, but with great fear. Fear of the unknown, fear of dying here and now.”

Hundreds of kilometers (miles) to the west, 38-year-old Tatyana, a worker at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant who spent four months living under Russian occupation in the town of Enerhodar, trembled as she recounted seeing bombs explode near the plant, and how her family endured a 24-hour ordeal to escape to Ukrainian-held territory.

When she visited a support center in Boyarka, south of Kyiv, several months ago to register for aid, she collapsed into uncontrollable tears. The staff called a psychologist.

Therapy has helped, said Tatyana, who also asked that her surname not be used to talk openly about seeking out mental health care. Her gaze was blank and unfocused during pauses as she spoke following a group therapy session last week. She’s trying to cope with the feelings of living in a war.

“This fear that comes when you realize that you may lose everything in a moment,” she said. Life is “like a light switch. It can be turned off and never turn on again.”

The need for mental health treatment has shot up across Ukraine, professionals say, even as they deal with the effects of war in their own lives.

“The demand is huge, and unfortunately it will only grow,” said psychotherapist Pavlo Horbenko, who has worked at a center in Kyiv treating people affected by war since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and set up two proxy breakaway states in Ukraine’s east.

He noted a significant increase in patients seeking treatment for sexual violence, bereavement and suicidal thoughts. “Previously, it was one or two requests a week, and now there can be 10 a day.”

Judging by other countries that have suffered conflict, psychological treatment needs increase rapidly after the fighting ends, Horbenko said.

For now, people are focused on surviving. “But when the war is over, ... then we can afford to relax. And when we can relax, the symptoms that have been accumulating for all this time will appear,” he said.

Like a soldier wounded in battle who doesn’t feel pain until he is out of immediate danger, “that’s when the wounds start to hurt. This is how it is with psychological traumas.”

Horbenko said there has been an increase in the number of mental health specialists in Ukraine since 2014, but far more are needed. “The demand still far exceeds the capacity,” he said.

Authorities have been seeking to increase mental health services across Ukraine.

Lebanese psychiatrist Dr. Maya Bizri recently visited Ukraine as part of a program run by the medical aid organization MedGlobal, at the request of the Ministry of Health, to assess needs and train doctors and nurses in recognizing mental health issues in both colleagues and patients.

“What is really being affected ... are the health care workers,” Bizri said. “There are a lot of trainings about how to deal with traumatized patients or with physical injuries, but no one addresses the health care of the health care professionals.”

Under the MedGlobal program, doctors and nurses are trained to help themselves and colleagues cope with psychological pressures, so they can in turn train others.

“There is an acute distress and an acute unmet need that is not being addressed, and if you want a health care system that is resilient, you have to take care of your own people,” Bizri said. “And I think the Ministry of Health is very aware of that because they are very engaged in doing this.”

Kramatorsk psychiatric hospital director Dr. Ludmyla Sevastianova said it was the need for mental health professionals that was helping them cope.

The war “affects us just as much as it affects patients,” she said. “We are also worried about our families, our relatives and friends. But we are doing our medical duty, we are helping.”

Sevastianova, a psychiatrist, has made it her mission “to save the hospital in order to keep people working, to save the hospital so it can provide care to patients. This is the goal and it helps.”

But she is under no illusions about the potential for long-term consequences.

“Things do not pass without a trace. I cut my hand, a scar remains. So it is with our psyche,” Sevastianova said.

“Now we need to adapt, we need to survive, we need to provide assistance, we need to work. ... What

effects this will have, we will understand in the future.”

Follow AP’s coverage of the war in Ukraine: <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

Florida set to execute ‘ninja killer’ for 1989 murders

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Florida has ramped up executions under Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, with a man known as the “ninja killer” set to die Wednesday for the 1989 slayings of a couple visiting the state from New Jersey.

Louis Bernard Gaskin, 56, was scheduled to be executed at 6 p.m. by lethal injection for the deaths of Robert Sturmfels, 56, and Georgette Sturmfels, 55, on Dec. 20, 1989, in their Flagler County winter home on Florida’s northeast coast. It will be the state’s 100th execution since the reinstatement of the death penalty in 1976. There are another 297 people on Florida’s death row.

Gaskin, who was dubbed the “ninja killer” because he wore all-black ninja clothing during the crimes, shot his victims with a .22-caliber rifle, investigators said. He was convicted of first-degree murder.

Property that he stole from the Sturmfels’ home — a clock, two lamps and a videocassette recorder — was found at his residence and were intended to be Christmas gifts for his girlfriend, according to investigators. He was also convicted of armed robbery, burglary and the attempted murder of another couple who lived nearby that same night.

DeSantis has been signing death warrants at a rapid pace this year as he prepares his widely expected presidential campaign. He only oversaw two executions in his first four years in office, both in 2019.

This execution comes six weeks after Donald Dillbeck, 59, was put to death for the 1990 murder of Faye Vann, 44, in Tallahassee, and three weeks before the scheduled execution of Darryl B. Barwick for slaying Rebecca Wendt, 24, in 1986 in Panama City.

Barring any stays for Gaskin and Barwick, it will be the shortest period three executions have been carried out in Florida since three condemned prisoners were put to death within 36 days in 2014 under then Republican Gov. Rick Scott.

Local media reported at the time that Gaskin quickly confessed to the crimes and told a psychologist before his trial that he knew what he was doing.

“The guilt was always there,” Gaskin said. “The devil had more of a hold than God did. I knew that I was wrong. I wasn’t insane.”

Jurors voted 8-4 in 1990 to recommend the death sentence, which the judge accepted. Florida law now requires a unanimous jury vote for capital punishment, although the Legislature could send DeSantis a bill this week that would allow 8-4 jury recommendations for capital punishment.

The state and U.S. supreme courts have rejected appeals Gaskin filed since his death warrant was signed, with the latest denial coming Tuesday.

2nd Black lawmaker could be returned to Tennessee House

By ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Commissioners in Memphis are scheduled to decide Wednesday whether to return a Black Democrat to the Republican-led Tennessee House after he and a Black colleague were kicked out of the Legislature following their support of gun control protesters.

The Shelby County Board of Commissioners set a vote to determine whether Justin Pearson will be sent back to the Legislature in Nashville.

Republicans banished Pearson and Rep. Justin Jones last week over their role in a gun control protest on the House floor in the aftermath of a deadly school shooting in Nashville that left three children and three adults dead. A

The Nashville Metropolitan Council took only a few minutes Monday to unanimously restore Jones to office. He was quickly reinstated to his House seat.

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The House's vote to remove Pearson and Jones but keep white Rep. Gloria Johnson drew accusations of racism. Johnson survived by one vote. Republican leadership denied that race was a factor, however.

Ahead of the vote, Pearson is set to lead a march from the National Civil Rights Museum to the county commission's office in downtown Memphis.

The expulsions last Thursday made Tennessee a new front in the battle for the future of American democracy and propelled the ousted lawmakers into the national spotlight. In the span of a few days, the two had raised thousands of campaign dollars, and the Tennessee Democratic Party had received a new jolt of support from across the U.S.

The appointments are on an interim basis. Special elections for the seats will take place in the coming months. Jones and Pearson have said they plan to run in the special election.

Political tensions rose when Pearson, Johnson and Jones joined with hundreds of demonstrators who packed the Capitol last month to call for passage of gun control measures.

As protesters filled galleries, the lawmakers approached the front of the House chamber with a bullhorn and participated in a chant. The scene unfolded days after the shooting at the Covenant School, a private Christian school.

Support for Pearson has come from around the country, including Memphis. During a Monday rally in support of Tyre Nichols, who died in January after he was beaten by police during an arrest, backers of Pearson said the commission was "on the clock."

"You've got one job — to reinstate Justin Pearson," activist LJ Abraham said.

Pearson grew up in the same House district he was chosen to represent after longtime state Rep. Barbara Cooper, a Black Democrat, died in office. It winds along the neighborhoods, forests and wetlands of south Memphis, through the city's downtown area and into north Shelby County.

Before he was elected, Pearson helped lead a successful campaign against a planned oil pipeline that would have run through neighborhoods and wetlands, and near wells that pump water from the Memphis Sand Aquifer, which provides drinking water to 1 million people.

He gained a quick reputation as a skilled community activist and gifted public speaker.

Mexican immigration agency chief to be charged in fatal fire

By FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ, SONIA PÉREZ D. and MARÍA VERZA undefined

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's top immigration official will face criminal charges in a fire that killed 40 migrants in Ciudad Juarez last month, with federal prosecutors saying he was remiss in not preventing the disaster despite earlier indications of problems at his agency's detention centers.

The decision to file charges against Francisco Garduño, the head of Mexico's National Immigration Institute, was announced late Tuesday by the federal Attorney General's Office.

It followed repeated calls from within Mexico, and from some Central American nations, not to stop the case at the five low-level officials, guards and a Venezuelan migrant already facing homicide charges in the case.

Anger initially focused on two guards who were seen fleeing the March 27 fire, without unlocking the cell door to allow the migrants to escape. But President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said earlier Tuesday that they didn't have the keys.

The Attorney General's Office said several other officers of Garduño's agency will also face charges for failing to carry out their duties, the statement said, but prosecutors did not explain what specific charges or identify the officials.

Prosecutors said the case showed a "pattern of irresponsibility"

The press office of the immigration agency that Garduño heads did respond to messages and phone calls requesting comment.

Prosecutors said that after a fire at another detention center in the Gulf coast state of Tabasco killed one person and injured 14 in 2020, the immigration agency knew there were problems which needed to be corrected. but alleged they failed to act.

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There have long been complaints about corruption and bad conditions at Mexico's migrant detention facilities, but they have never been seriously addressed.

López Obrador's comments about the guards in last month's fire in the border city of Ciudad Juarez came on the same day that the bodies of 17 Guatemala migrants and six Hondurans killed in the fire were flown back to their home countries.

It was unclear what effect López Obrador's comments might have on the trial of the guards, who were detained previously over the fire.

"The door was closed, because the person who had the keys wasn't there," López Obrador said.

A video from a security camera inside the facility shows guards walking away when the fire started in late March inside the cell holding migrants.

The guards are seen hurrying away as smoke fills the facility, and they did not appear to make any effort to release the migrants.

Three Mexican immigration officials, a guard and a Venezuelan migrant are being held for investigation in connection with the fire. They face homicide charges.

The migrant allegedly set fire to foam mattresses at the detention center to protest what he apparently thought were plans to move or deport the migrants.

In Guatemala City, relatives of the victims gathered at an air force base with flowers and photos of the deceased to mark their return.

"My son, my love," a female voice could be heard calling out, amid sobs from those present as the coffins were unloaded and placed in a line, and relatives were allowed to approach them.

Mexican military planes carried the bodies six migrants to Honduras and 17 to Guatemala. Authorities say 19 of the 40 dead were from Guatemala, but two bodies were still in the process of having their identities confirmed.

An additional 11 Guatemalans were injured in the fire.

Guatemalan Foreign Minister Mario Búcaro accompanied the bodies, which were to be taken overland to their hometowns in nine different provinces.

Some bodies of Salvadoran migrants were returned to El Salvador last week. So far, 31 bodies have been sent back to their home countries.

Head of Mexican immigration agency charged after fatal fire

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The head of Mexico's National Immigration Institute will face criminal charges for a fire that killed 40 migrants in a locked cell, the federal Attorney General's Office said Tuesday night.

The office said in a statement that the head of the immigration agency, Francisco Garduño, was criminally remiss in not preventing the fire, despite earlier incidents showed the situation at the country's migrant detention centers needed correcting.

Several other officers of the agency will also face charges for failing to carry out their duties, the statement said, but prosecutors did not explain what specific charges or identify the officials.

Prosecutors said the case showed a "pattern of irresponsibility," their statement released just hours after Mexico's president said two guards seen fleeing when the fire broke out did not have keys to the cell door.

The press office of the immigration agency that Garduño heads did immediately respond to messages and phone calls requesting comment.

Prosecutors said that after a fire at another detention center in the Gulf coast state of Tabasco killed one person and injured 14 in 2020, the immigration agency knew there were problems which needed to be corrected. but alleged they failed to act.

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Trump lawyer seeks monthlong delay in trial over rape claim

NEW YORK (AP) — An attorney for Donald Trump is seeking a one-month delay in the trial regarding a columnist's claims that Trump raped her in a department store dressing room in the 1990s, contending that his client's right to a fair trial depends on a "cooling off" period following the former president's indictment and arraignment.

The trial was set for April 25. In a letter Tuesday to Judge Lewis A. Kaplan, attorney Joseph Tacopina cited "the recent deluge of prejudicial media coverage" surrounding Trump's arrest and court appearance in arguing for a delay. The former president was charged March 30 with 34 felony counts related to allegations that he paid hush money to an adult film star, Stormy Daniels.

The civil case before Kaplan was brought against Trump in November by E. Jean Carroll, a columnist who says the wealthy real estate developer raped her in early 1996 after a chance meeting at the Bergdorf Goodman department store.

Trump has repeatedly and emphatically denied the allegation. A jury will be asked to decide whether the rape occurred and if Trump defamed Carroll with his comments.

A temporary state law that took effect last year allows adult rape victims to sue their abusers, even if attacks happened decades ago.

Tacopina's letter seeking a delay in the trial for Carroll's civil suit followed Kaplan's order on Monday directing parties in the case to notify him by April 20 whether they will be present throughout the trial in Manhattan federal court. Carroll's attorney has said she will attend; Trump's attorney has not responded to requests for comment on Kaplan's order.

Carroll's lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, said a response to the request for a delay will be filed in a letter to the judge. The lawyer and the judge are not related.

Trump and Iowa evangelicals: A bond that is hard to break

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — When South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott returns to Iowa on Wednesday, he will meet privately with a group of pastors at a Cedar Rapids church.

For someone considering a Republican presidential campaign, the visit is part of a decades-old courtship ritual in the state that kicks off the nomination process. Born-again Christians are the most influential group in Iowa's GOP caucuses, giving faith leaders particular sway in helping organize voters and shape the results.

But in the early phase of the next presidential campaign, Scott's joyful proclamations of his Christian faith face an unlikely obstacle. Like other Republicans eyeing the White House, he is navigating an evangelical community that is faithful to former President Donald Trump, the thrice-married former reality television star who once supported abortion rights and spent decades boasting of his sexual prowess.

That history repelled many Iowa evangelical leaders during the last competitive Republican caucuses in 2016, when they helped push Texas Sen. Ted Cruz to victory in the opening contest. As the 2024 campaign begins, however, many of those same leaders are open to Trump, grateful for his judicial appointments that resulted in the dismantling of a constitutional right to abortion.

They are unswayed by the controversy swirling around him, including the 34-count felony indictment handed down against Trump last week stemming from hush money payments made to a porn actress who alleged having an extramarital affair with him.

"I believe, and I think many evangelical Christians understand, politics at that level is a blood sport. Donald Trump is fighting. That's why he got things done," said the Rev. Terry Amann of suburban Des Moines. "So, our role isn't to judge him."

Trump has denied having an affair with the actress, Stormy Daniels, and has characterized the charges — along with ongoing investigations related to other matters in Georgia and Washington — as politically motivated. But the evangelical support reflects a broader dynamic taking hold with the GOP base rallying around Trump in the aftermath of his indictment even amid signals that he could be vulnerable with the broader public in a general election.

An ABC News/Ipsos poll released last weekend found 50% of Americans thought Trump should have been charged with a crime and about as many — 48% — said he should suspend his campaign. But just 14% of Republicans said he should be charged.

That GOP loyalty to Trump was evident in interviews with more than a dozen Iowa pastors in the wake of Trump's indictment. Each cited Trump's role in helping overturn Roe vs. Wade as central to the long-term rethinking about him since his first campaign. Several also pointed to Trump's recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to the holy city.

"I appreciate the fact that, for what seems like the first time in my lifetime, someone did what they said they were going to do," said the Rev. Kerry Jech of Marshalltown. "With Donald Trump, what he promised us, he delivered on. That's one thing I can't get away from."

In a new display of pragmatism, Jech and others like him who didn't support Trump in 2016 say the former president is no less imperfect a man now, but that his action on policy they hold dear may erase questions about his moral character.

During the 2016 campaign, the Rev. Mike Demastus of Des Moines supported Cruz and called Trump "morally loathsome," "wicked" and "a reprehensible man." Today, Demastus calls him "the most pro-life president we have ever had," and would consider supporting him in the caucuses, along with others.

Even Demastus' qualified support still puts Trump in better position now than his first bid.

In a March Des Moines Register Iowa Poll, Trump was viewed favorably by 58% of evangelicals, unfavorably by 39% and 3% were unsure. On the eve of the 2016 caucuses, Iowa evangelicals seemed to have a dimmer view of Trump. The Des Moines Register's Iowa Poll taken on the eve of the caucuses showed Trump with support from only 19% of evangelicals, with Cruz supported by 33%.

The awkward position is new for Iowa social conservatives, who have for three consecutive Republican presidential campaigns decidedly backed the more vocally evangelical candidate, though none would go

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on to win the nomination.

Beyond Cruz, former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum won the 2012 caucuses as a crusading abortion opponent. In 2008, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, an ordained Baptist minister, posted a surprise victory by cobbling together a Christian coalition of pastors and religious home-school advocates.

Scott and former Vice President Mike Pence hope to replicate their success in 2024, should they announce plans to run. It's a strategy pioneered by former Christian broadcasting personality Pat Robertson, whose focus on Iowa's network of evangelical Christian churches helped him finish a surprise second place in Iowa's 1988 caucuses, ahead of Vice President George H.W. Bush.

Scott, who is launching an exploratory committee for president, has already met several times with Iowa clergy, as has Pence. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is expected to run, squeezed in a backstage meeting and prayer with a handful of pastors after a public event in Des Moines last month.

The first multi-candidate gathering of the 2024 Iowa caucus campaign is scheduled for later this month and is expected to feature presidential prospects Pence, Scott, former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson and others speaking to hundreds of Iowa social conservatives. Trump plans to address the group by video.

The more traditional approach set against Trump's atypical combination of accomplishment and high-drama personal life creates a new dynamic for Iowa social conservatives to weigh.

"President Trump has stood up for the values that we hold dear," said Brad Sherman, a pastor and Republican state representative from Williamsburg who plans to support Trump in the caucuses. "Then we need to pray for him that his personal life comes in line with that."

Others say everyone is offered forgiveness.

"He is no perfect person. No one would say that. He is no King David," said the Rev. Bill Tvedt of Oskaloosa. "But even David was tempted."

Tvedt also likened Trump to the biblical figure Cyrus, who was not a Christian but is lauded as an Old Testament hero for liberating the Jews from captivity in Egypt. "He is more of a Cyrus, a protector," Tvedt said.

The Rev. Dave Martin, a Marshalltown pastor, was an outlier in the interviews, suggesting Trump's judicial strategy was aimed at reinforcing support within a group that had doubts in 2016.

"Let's not forget that not that many years ago he was for legal abortion," said Martin, who says he would likely not support Trump in the caucuses.

Martin also blasted Trump's statement from the 2016 campaign when he rejected the need to repent.

"Why do I have to repent or ask for forgiveness if I am not making mistakes?" Trump asked CNN's Anderson Cooper during a 2015 interview. "I work hard. I'm an honorable person."

Amann, the suburban Des Moines pastor who rejected judging Trump, said the former president need only worry about evangelical support if his resolve for their priorities weakens.

"If he backs off of pro-life, that would be a bigger issue," Amann said.

The once anti-Trump DeMastus was quick to remind that Trump blamed devout abortion opponents for Republicans' weaker-than-expected showing in last year's congressional elections. Notably, Trump said candidates who opposed legal abortion in cases of rape or incest or to save the life of the pregnant woman "lost a large numbers of votes."

"That ticked me off so bad," DeMastus said. "That's the part of him I'm talking about where he just needs to keep his mouth shut."

Brazil's Lula visits China, seeking ties and Ukraine support

By ELÉONORE HUGHES and CARLA BRIDI Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva flew off to China on Tuesday to strengthen ties with his nation's biggest trade partner and win support for his long shot push for peace in Ukraine.

Lula wants Brazil, China and other nations to help mediate the war as part of his nation's return to the world stage, but his proposals to end the conflict have irked Ukraine and some in the West. Less contro-

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versial is the Brazilian and Chinese mutual interest in trade after a rocky period under Lula's predecessor.

China and Brazil are expected to sign at least 20 bilateral agreements during Lula's two-day stay, according to the Brazilian government. Lula plans to visit Shanghai and Beijing, and meet with his counterpart, Xi Jinping, on Friday.

The two leaders are expected to discuss trade, investment, reindustrialization, energy transition, climate change and peace agreements, the Brazilian government said.

China is Brazil's biggest export market, each year buying tens of billions of dollars worth of soybeans, beef, iron ore, poultry, pulp, sugar cane, cotton and crude oil. Brazil is the biggest recipient of Chinese investment in Latin America, according to Chinese state media.

Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and members of his family at times caused friction with Chinese authorities during his 2019-2022 term.

In 2020, when Bolsonaro's lawmaker son Eduardo blamed the COVID-19 pandemic on the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese ambassador to Brazil called his words "an evil insult against China and the Chinese people." Later that year, Eduardo referred to the giant Chinese technology company Huawei as "Chinese espionage," prompting a sharp rebuke from China's embassy. Last year, China did not have an ambassador in Brasilia for eight months.

The rift stoked criticism in Brazil, even among sectors that supported Bolsonaro, like agribusiness.

"I want the Chinese to understand that their investment here will be wonderfully welcome, but not to buy our companies. To build new things, which we need," Lula told journalists in Brasilia on April 6.

Chinese companies are involved in public works projects in Brazil, including a metro line in Sao Paulo, the country's business capital. One of the agreements Lula will sign in China will be for construction of the sixth satellite built under a binational program, a satellite that would monitor biomes such as the Amazon rainforest.

"Brazil can't afford to turn its back on the benefits China brings. The U.S. doesn't have the capacity to absorb Brazil's exports as China does, nor occupy the same space in investment and infrastructure," said Pedro Brites, an expert on China at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a university and think tank in Sao Paulo.

And China is encouraging its companies to find new markets and foreign partners to reduce reliance on the U.S.

"Lula knows you have to treat your clients well. Even more so when it is your best client," said Charles Tang, who chairs the Brazil-China Chamber of Commerce.

In what Tang suggested was the result of a renewed partnership, China ended restrictions on Brazilian beef just before Lula was initially scheduled to make his trip. Sales of Brazilian beef to China were banned in February following the discovery of an atypical case of mad cow disease.

Lula's visit to China, initially scheduled for March but canceled after he fell sick, is also an attempt by the leftist leader to reaffirm Brazil's role on the global stage following Bolsonaro's term, who admired right-wing nationalists and showed little interest in international affairs or travel abroad.

Lula visited Argentina and Uruguay in January and the U.S. in February, signaling the importance he gives to international affairs, experts said. He toured the world during his first presidency, particularly in his second term, when he visited dozens of countries, and has visited China twice before.

"Lula is implementing the promise he made that Brazil is back," said Oliver Stuenkel, a political scientist at the Getulio Vargas Foundation.

China and Brazil are members of the BRICS group of developing countries and have pushed for changes in what they say is a U.S.-dominated system of managing global political affairs.

Russia is also a BRICS member, and a key piece of Lula's outreach abroad is his proposal that Brazil and other developing countries, including China, mediate peace.

Lula has irritated Ukraine and some in the West with his position on the war, most recently by suggesting during a meeting with journalists in Brasilia last week that Ukraine cede Crimea as a means to forge peace. Xi met with Putin last month, sending a message to U.S. and European leaders that their condemnation of Russia's invasion is not unanimous.

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Earlier this month, a Lula adviser, former foreign affairs minister Celso Amorim, took a discreet trip to Moscow, where he met with President Vladimir Putin.

Amorim "went to listen and to say the time has come to talk," Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira told reporters in the capital, Brasilia, on April 5.

There is at least some common ground. Vieira noted that the Chinese peace proposal presented in February contains aspects in common with Lula's, such as ceasing hostilities and starting negotiations.

"These are completely plausible and may be stimulus for talks," he said.

Bridi reported from Brasilia. Associated Press writers Joe McDonald in Beijing and Mauricio Savarese in Sao Paulo and AP researcher Yu Bing in Beijing contributed to this report.

Fox attorneys in libel case reveal dual roles for Murdoch

By RANDALL CHASE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Attorneys defending Fox in a defamation case related to false claims about the 2020 election withheld critical information about the role company founder Rupert Murdoch played at Fox News, a revelation that angered the judge when it came up at a Tuesday hearing.

It was not clear whether the development would affect a trial scheduled to begin Thursday with jury selection. Dominion Voting Systems is suing Fox for \$1.6 billion, saying it damaged its reputation by repeatedly airing false claims that the company helped orchestrate a fraud that cost former President Donald Trump re-election.

The role of Fox executives is at the heart of the case. The company's attorneys have sought to insulate members of the Murdoch family and to keep them from testifying live before a jury, arguing that their roles at the parent company, Fox Corp., put them at a distance from the Fox News shows that aired the bogus claims.

Fox Corp. had asserted since Dominion filed its lawsuit in 2021 that Rupert Murdoch had no official role at Fox News. In its filings, it had listed Fox News officers as Suzanne Scott, Jay Wallace and Joe Dorrego. But on Easter Sunday, Fox disclosed to Dominion's attorneys that Murdoch also is "executive chair" at Fox News. The disclosure came after Superior Court Judge Eric Davis wondered aloud during a status conference last week who Fox News' officers were.

Davis was clearly disturbed by the disclosure, coming on the eve of the trial.

"My problem is that it has been represented to me more than once that he is not an officer," the judge said.

Davis suggested that had he known of Murdoch's dual role at Fox Corp. and Fox News, he might have reached different conclusions in a summary judgment ruling he issued last month. In that ruling, the judge said there was no dispute that the statements aired by Fox were false, but that a jury would have to decide whether Fox News acted with actual malice and whether Fox Corp. directly participated in airing the statements.

To Fox attorney Matthew Carter, Davis said: "You have a credibility problem."

In response, Carter said he believed Murdoch's title at Fox News was only "honorific."

"I'm not mad at you," the judge later told Carter. "I'm mad at the situation I'm in."

In a statement issued after Tuesday's pretrial hearing, Fox said, "Rupert Murdoch has been listed as executive chairman of Fox News in our SEC filings since 2019 and this filing was referenced by Dominion's own attorney during his deposition."

It's unclear whether the judge will take any action in response to the late disclosure. But an attorney for Dominion said he wanted Fox to further explain Murdoch's role with the network, indicating the issue could come up when the pretrial hearing continues Wednesday.

Dominion attorney Justin Nelson told the judge the disclosure has "a big impact" on the case. He said Fox's failure to disclose Murdoch's status at Fox News has deprived Dominion of "a whole bunch" of information from Murdoch as a custodian of Fox News records that it was entitled to have.

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"It is something that really has impacted how we have litigated this case," he said.

Tuesday's development was the latest to turn an uncomfortable spotlight on the network.

Information obtained by Dominion as part of its lawsuit has shown that some network hosts harbored off-camera doubts about election fraud claims but nevertheless allowed program guests to repeatedly make them in the aftermath of the 2020 election. The case also has drawn scrutiny of various emails and text messages shared among Rupert Murdoch, his son Lachlan Murdoch and Scott, the Fox News CEO, about election coverage and the allegations by Trump and his allies that he was cheated.

They revealed a chorus of voices, from Rupert Murdoch and top network hosts to producers and publicists, who internally cast the election-stealing conspiracy claims as crazy even as the network repeatedly gave them a platform. Internal communications also showed that at the time, major players at Fox were deeply worried about retaining pro-Trump viewers.

In a ruling earlier Tuesday, the judge denied a motion by Fox seeking to bar any reference at trial to matters involving the Murdoch family, which owns Fox Corp. The judge also said he would allow jurors to hear some testimony about threats directed at the voting machine company, but only to a point.

The judge granted a motion by Fox to prohibit any reference to specific threats or harassment directed at Dominion, saying he did not want the jury to be prejudiced against Fox because of threats made by people with no connection to the network. But he said he would allow Dominion to talk generally about threats it had received to show how it has been damaged by the Fox broadcasts.

"It has decimated Dominion's ability to attract and retain employees, because the company is under siege," said Megan Meier, an attorney for the voting machine company.

The judge already decided last week there would be no testimony about the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

US, Panama and Colombia aim to stop Darien Gap migration

By KATHIA MARTÍNEZ Associated Press

PANAMA CITY (AP) — The United States, Panama and Colombia announced Tuesday that they will launch a 60-day campaign aimed at halting illegal migration through the treacherous Darien Gap, where the flow of migrants has multiplied this year.

Details on how the governments will try to curb the flow of migrants that reached nearly 90,000 in just the first three months of this year through the dense, lawless jungle were not provided in the joint statement.

The ambitious announcement came as the Biden administration nervously awaits the expected end of a pandemic-related rule May 11 that has suspended rights to seek asylum for many. Without that instrument of dissuasion at the U.S. border, there is concern migrant arrivals could again become unmanageable.

The joint statement said the countries will also use "new lawful and flexible pathways for tens of thousands of migrants and refugees as an alternative to irregular migration," but again gave no details.

The plan's third element is investment to reduce poverty and create jobs in the Colombian and Panamanian border communities, presumably so fewer people work at smuggling migrants.

"Recognizing our shared interest and responsibility to prevent the risk to human life, disrupt transnational criminal organizations, and preserve the vital rainforest, the governments of Panamá, Colombia, and the United States intend to carry out a two-month coordinated campaign to address the serious humanitarian situation in the Darién," the statement said.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas met with the foreign ministers of Panama and Colombia in Panama on Tuesday.

According to Panama's government, more than 87,000 migrants crossed the Darien Gap in the first three months of the year, mostly from Venezuela, Haiti and Ecuador. That was up from nearly 14,000 migrants during the same period a year earlier.

Last year, set a record for migrants using the Darien route, with nearly 250,000. That increase was driven largely by Venezuelans, who accounted for some 60% of the migrants crossing there last year.

The Biden administration responded in October by using the pandemic-related rule known as Title 42

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to deny Venezuelans the chance to request asylum at the border. Instead, the U.S. government said it would accept as many as 24,000 Venezuelans at U.S. airports who had already applied and been pre-approved through a government online application. That program was expanded to Nicaragua, Haiti and Cuba earlier this year.

Now with Title 42 set to expire next month, the U.S. is looking at the Darien Gap as the natural choke point to stop extracontinental migration.

Michael Lee Weintraub, a professor at the University of the Andes School of Government in Colombia, said that with Biden under pressure from conservatives to address immigration ahead of next year's presidential election, his administration is looking for ways to discourage irregular migration and make legal migration easier.

But he expressed doubt that Colombia's security forces have the capacity to dramatically affect migrant smuggling because the country's armed groups profit from it and are "very sophisticated."

The Darien Gap is among the most dangerous portions of the long route to the U.S. borders. Migrants and international human rights groups have denounced sexual assaults, robberies and killings in the remote jungle. That's in addition to the natural dangers posed by venomous snakes and rushing rivers.

For the migrants who survive the crossing, the Panamanian government and nongovernmental groups bus migrants across Panama to near its border with Costa Rica to continue their journey.

Associated Press writer Astrid Suarez in Bogota, Colombia, contributed to this report.

RoboCop? No, RoboDog: Robotic dog rejoins New York police

By KAREN MATTHEWS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City officials unveiled three new high-tech policing devices Tuesday, including a robotic dog that critics called creepy when it first joined the police pack 2 1/2 years ago.

The new devices, which also include a GPS tracker for stolen cars and a cone-shaped security robot, will be rolled out in a manner that is "transparent, consistent and always done in close collaboration with the people we serve," said police Commissioner Keechant Sewell, who joined Mayor Eric Adams and other officials at a Times Square press conference where the security robot and the mechanical canine nicknamed Digidog were displayed.

"Digidog is out of the pound," said Adams, a Democrat and former police officer. "Digidog is now part of the toolkit that we are using."

The city's first robot police dog was leased in 2020 by Adams' predecessor, former Mayor Bill de Blasio, but the city's contract for the device was cut short after critics derided it as creepy and dystopian.

Adams said he won't bow to anti-robot dog pressure.

"A few loud people were opposed to it and we took a step back," the mayor said. "That is not how I operate. I operate on looking at what's best for the city."

Adams said the remote-controlled, 70-pound (32-kilogram) Digidog will be deployed in risky situations like hostage standoffs starting this summer.

"If you have a barricaded suspect, if you have someone that's inside a building that is armed, instead of sending police in there, you send Digidog in there," he said. "So these are smart ways of using good technologies."

The tracking system called StarChase will allow police to launch a GPS tag that will attach itself to a stolen car so that officers can track the vehicle's location. The New York Police Department's pilot program for using the system will last 90 days, officials said.

The Autonomous Security Robot, which Adams compared to a Roomba, will be deployed inside the Times Square subway station in a seven-month pilot program starting this summer, police officials said.

The device, used in shopping centers and other locations for several years, will at first be joined by a human partner, police said.

Civil libertarians and police reform advocates questioned the need for the high-tech devices.

"This latest announcement is just the most recent example of how Mayor Adams allows unmitigated overspending of the NYPD's massively bloated budget," said Ileana Mendez-Penate, program director of Communities United for Police Reform. "The NYPD is buying robot dogs and other fancy tech while New Yorkers can't access food stamps because city agencies are short-staffed, and New Yorkers are getting evicted because they can't access their right to counsel."

Albert Fox Cahn, executive director of the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project, said: "The NYPD is turning bad science fiction into terrible policing. New York deserves real safety, not a knockoff RoboCop."

What we know so far on the leaked Pentagon documents

By TARA COPP and NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's been less than a week since news of highly classified military documents on the Ukraine war surfaced, sending the Pentagon into full-speed damage control to assure allies and assess the scope of the leak.

The information on scores of slides has publicized potential vulnerabilities in Ukraine's air defense capabilities and exposed private assessments by allies on an array of intelligence matters, raising questions about whether the leak will erode allies' trust in sharing information with the U.S. or impact Ukraine's plans to intensify the fight against Russia this spring.

Overall, the leaked documents present a "very serious risk to national security," a top Pentagon spokesman told reporters Monday.

This is a look at what the documents are, what is known about how they surfaced, and their potential impact.

WHAT ARE THEY?

The classified documents — which have not been individually authenticated by U.S. officials — range from briefing slides mapping out Ukrainian military positions to assessments of international support for Ukraine and other sensitive topics, including under what circumstances Russian President Vladimir Putin might use nuclear weapons.

There's no clear answer on how many documents were leaked. The Associated Press has viewed approximately 50 documents; some estimates put the total number in the hundreds.

WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

No one knows for sure, not even the Pentagon chief.

"They were somewhere in the web, and where exactly, and who had access at that point, we don't know. We simply don't know," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said at a press conference Tuesday. "We will continue to investigate and turn over every rock until we find the source of this and the extent of it."

It's possible the leak may have started on a site called Discord.

Discord is a social media platform popular with people playing online games. The Discord site hosts real-time voice, video and text chats for groups and describes itself as a place "where you can belong to a school club, a gaming group, or a worldwide art community."

In one of those forums, originally created to talk about a range of topics, members would debate the war in Ukraine. According to one member of the chat, an unidentified poster shared documents that the poster claimed were classified, first typing them out with the poster's own thoughts, then, as of a few months ago, uploading images of folded papers.

The person who said he was a member of the forum told The Associated Press that another person, identified online only as "Lucca," shared the documents in a different Discord chat. From there, they appear to have been spread until they were picked up by the media.

Many details of the story can't be immediately verified. And top U.S. officials acknowledge publicly that they're still trying to find answers.

WHAT'S BEEN REVEALED

The leaks have highlighted how closely the U.S. monitors how its allies and friends interact with Russia and China. Officials in several countries have denied or rejected allegations from the leaked records.

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The AP has reported on U.S. intelligence picking up claims from Russian operatives that they were building a closer relationship with the United Arab Emirates, the oil-rich Middle Eastern nation that hosts important American military installations. The UAE rejected the allegations, calling them "categorically false."

The Washington Post reported Monday that Egypt's president ordered subordinates to secretly prepare to ship up to 40,000 rockets to Russia as it wages war in Ukraine. A spokesman for the Egyptian foreign ministry said Egypt was maintaining "noninvolvement in this crisis and committing to maintain equal distance with both sides."

Other leaks have concerned allegations that South Korean leaders were hesitant to ship artillery shells to Ukraine and that Israel's Mossad spy service opposed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposed overhaul of the judiciary.

Funded at \$90 billion annually, the U.S. intelligence agencies have sweeping powers to tap electronic communications, run spies and monitor with satellites. The results of those powers are rarely seen in public, even in limited form.

U.S. RESPONSE

The Pentagon has begun an internal review to assess the leak's impact on national security. The review is being led by Milancy D. Harris, the deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence and security, a defense official said in a statement to AP. The team includes representatives from the offices of legislative affairs, public affairs, policy, legal counsel and the joint staff, the official said.

The Pentagon was also quickly taking steps to reduce the number of people who have access to briefings, a second defense official said. Both officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters. Pentagon officials are also closely monitoring where the leaked slides are "being posted and amplified," said Chris Meagher, assistant to the secretary of defense for public affairs.

Separately, the Justice Department has opened a criminal investigation into how the slides were obtained and leaked.

CIA Director William Burns on Tuesday called the leak "deeply unfortunate."

"It's something that the U.S. government takes extremely seriously," he said in remarks at Rice University. "The Pentagon and the Department of Justice have now launched a quite intense investigation to get to the bottom of this."

WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

Senior military leaders have been contacting allies to address the fallout. That includes calls "at a high level to reassure them of our commitment to safeguarding intelligence and fidelity to our security partnerships. Those conversations began over the weekend and are ongoing," Meagher said.

U.S. officials are likely to face more questions when they travel to Germany next week for the next contact group meeting, where representatives of more than 50 nations gather to coordinate weapons and aid support for Ukraine. But the document leak is not expected to affect that meeting or allies' willingness to continue to provide military assistance to Ukraine, a senior defense official told The Associated Press, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

"I think a lot of the allies will probably be more curious about why it happened," said Chris Skaluba, director of the Atlantic Council's transatlantic security initiative. Given the high-level security clearance needed to access the information in the first place, the leak raises questions as to who "would have that much of an agenda to put it out there," and whether the intent was to undermine support for Ukraine, Skaluba said.

Austin on Tuesday contacted his South Korean counterpart, Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup, to discuss the leaked documents, several of which were particularly sensitive to Seoul because they described U.S. surveillance of its ally and detailed South Korean reservations about providing munitions directly to Ukraine.

The two defense chiefs agreed that a "considerable number" of the leaked documents were fabricated, Kim Tae-hyo, a deputy national security director, told reporters. He said the alliance between the two countries wouldn't be affected by the leak and South Korea would seek to further strengthen cooperation with the United States.

And both Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken reached out to their counterparts in Ukraine. Austin suggested Tuesday the leaks would not have much of an impact on Ukraine's plans for a spring offensive.

Ukraine's strategy will "not be driven by a specific plan. They have a great plan to start and but only President Zelenskyy and his leadership really know the full details of that plan," Austin said.

For other sensitive issues highlighted in the leaked slides, such as Ukraine's shortage of air defense munitions, the shortage itself has been known and is one of the reasons U.S. military leaders have been pressing allies to supply whatever systems they can, such as the Iris-T systems pledged from Germany and the U.S.-manufactured Hawk air defense systems provided by Spain.

"Publicizing an apparent shortage of anti-aircraft missiles may give comfort to Russia. But if it energizes Ukraine's partners to accelerate delivery of missiles and other air defense capabilities, Kyiv will be grateful. The bigger 'known unknown' is the extent to which these leaks influence U.S. political support for Ukraine," said Ben Barry, senior fellow for land warfare at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Industrial fire prompts evacuation order in Indiana city

RICHMOND, Ind. (AP) — Authorities urged people to evacuate Tuesday near a large industrial fire in an Indiana city near the Ohio border that sent massive clouds of black smoke into the sky.

The fire occurred at a former factory site in Richmond, 70 miles (112.6 kilometers) east of Indianapolis, that lately had been used to store plastics and other materials for recycling or resale, Mayor Dave Snow said.

"They were under a city order to clean up and remediate that site," Snow told The Associated Press. "We knew that was a fire hazard the way they were storing materials."

Snow described it as a "serious, large-scale fire" that apparently started in a tractor-trailer parked onsite and spread quickly. He said the fire had been contained on three sides by early evening. The cause was not immediately known.

"This is an indoor and outdoor storage facility — very, very large," the mayor said.

There were no reports of injuries. But hundreds of people living within a half-mile (0.80 kilometer) of the fire were told to leave. People outside that radius who live downwind of the fire were advised to keep windows closed and pets inside.

Wind from the west blew black smoke across the state border into Ohio.

Bethesda Worship Center in Richmond offered temporary shelter for people forced out of their homes, while other agencies were trying to arrange hotel rooms if necessary, Pastor Ken Harris said.

Snow said state and federal regulators were at the scene to assess air quality and other environmental impacts.

Richmond has a population of 35,000.

Video shows Louisville police under fire from bank shooter

By DYLAN LOVAN, REBECCA REYNOLDS and CLAIRE GALOFARO Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Police body camera video released Tuesday showed the chaotic moments when police arrived at the scene of a mass shooting at a bank in downtown Louisville, as the shooter they couldn't see from the street rained bullets down on them.

The videos, taken from two wounded officers' lapels, offer a rare perspective of police officers responding to a massacre that killed five and injured eight others Monday. One, a rookie officer, was shot in the head within minutes of arriving at the scene, as his partner was grazed by a bullet and sought cover while still trying to take down the shooter.

Louisville Metro Police Department Deputy Chief Paul Humphrey walked reporters through edited footage and still photos at a new conference Tuesday and praised the responding officers for their heroism.

They received the call of a shooting at Old National Bank at 8:38 a.m., and the two officers arrived three minutes later, according to a chronology provided by police. They hadn't even gotten out of the patrol car when the gunman began firing on them.

"Back up, back up, back up," one officer shouted as gunshots thundered in the background.

One still image from surveillance video showed the 25-year-old shooter, who worked at the bank, hold-

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ing a rifle, wearing jeans, a blue button-down shirt and sneakers, surrounded by broken glass inside the building. He had already shot numerous people inside, and police said he set up an ambush position to attack officers as they arrived.

The front doors were glass, elevated from the sidewalk, and because of the reflection, the officers could not see the shooter inside, Humphrey said. But he could see them.

Officer Cory Galloway retrieved a rifle from the trunk of the patrol car.

"Cover for me," he said, and they reported to dispatch that there had been shots fired.

Galloway was training rookie Officer Nickolas Wilt, who had graduated from the police academy just 10 days earlier. The videos showed them walking up the stairs toward the front door when the gunman fired a barrage of bullets.

Wilt was shot in the head, though that was not captured on video. Galloway was grazed in the shoulder, police said. His body camera showed that he fell and then took cover behind a concrete planter at the bottom of the staircase leading to the building. Sirens from the dozens of police cars coming toward them wailed in the background.

"The shooter has an angle on that officer," he said in the video recording. "We need to get up there. I don't know where he's at, the glass is blocking him."

A video taken by a bystander across the street, which police also released Tuesday, showed him darting back and forth from one side of the planter to another, trying to get a shot at the gunman.

He waited, and as other officers arrived, more gunshots rang out and glass shattered.

Galloway fired toward the gunman at 8:44 a.m., three minutes after arriving.

"I think I got him down! I think he's down!" he shouted. "Suspect down! Get the officer!"

He advanced into the building, and shards of glass crunched under his feet. The video then showed Galloway approaching the suspect, who lay on the ground inside the lobby next to a long rifle.

"I think you can see the tension in that video," Humphrey said Tuesday. "You can understand the stress that those officers are going through. ... They did absolutely exactly what they needed to do to save lives. Once officers arrived on scene, not another person was shot."

Wilt was transported in the back of a police car to a hospital, Humphrey said. In the chaotic first minutes, police treated and triaged the victims inside. Humphrey said the ambulance service was short-staffed, so a police lieutenant drove the ambulance while emergency crews treated people at the scene.

Wilt was still in critical but stable condition Tuesday, according to University of Louisville Hospital Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jason Smith.

Two of the four wounded still in the hospital had injuries that were not life-threatening, Smith said.

Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg said it was crucial to release the footage because "transparency is important — even more so in a time of crisis."

Police Chief Jacquelyn Gwinn-Villaroel said at a news conference that bank employee Connor Sturgeon, 25, bought the AR-15 assault-style rifle used in the attack at a local dealership on April 4.

Armed with the rifle, Sturgeon killed his co-workers — including a close friend of Kentucky's governor — while livestreaming the attack.

"We do know this was targeted. He knew those individuals, of course, because he worked there," Gwinn-Villaroel said, but didn't give an indication of a motive behind the shooting.

Gwinn-Villaroel praised the "heroic actions" of officers who engaged the shooter without hesitation when they arrived.

"They went towards danger in order to save and preserve life," she said. "They stopped the threat so other lives could be saved. No hesitation, and they did what they were called to do."

The shooting, the 15th mass killing in the country this year, comes just two weeks after a former student killed three children and three adults at a Christian elementary school in Nashville, Tennessee, about 160 miles (260 kilometers) to the south.

In Louisville, five Old National Bank employees were killed: Joshua Barrick, 40, a senior vice president; Tommy Elliott, 63, also a senior vice president; Jim Tutt Jr., 64, a commercial real estate market executive;

Juliana Farmer, 45, a loan analyst; and Deana Eckert, 57, an executive administrative officer.

The mayor urged unity as the community processes its grief, over this shooting and the many other spasms of gun violence that have stunned this city.

"We're all feeling shaken by this, and scared and angry and a lot of other things too," Greenberg said. "It's important that we come together as a community to process this tragedy in particular but not just this tragedy because the reality is that we have already lost 40 people to gun violence in Louisville this year."

Associated Press reporter John Raby contributed from Charleston, West Virginia, and Jonathan Mattise from Nashville, Tennessee.

Idaho jurors see graphic photos of slain kids in mom's trial

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Jurors in the triple murder trial of a woman accused in the deaths of her two children and a romantic rival were shown gruesome photographs of the slain children Tuesday afternoon, as the grandfather of one of the kids sobbed in the back of the courtroom.

Seven-year-old Joshua "JJ" Vallow and his big sister Tylee Ryan were last seen in September of 2019, sparking a nationwide search. The search ended in tragedy the following year when their bodies were found buried in an eastern Idaho yard.

Lori Vallow Daybell and her fifth husband, Chad Daybell, are both charged with multiple counts of conspiracy, murder and grand theft in connection with the deaths of JJ and Tylee, the latter of whom was last seen shortly before her 17th birthday in 2019. The children were buried on Chad Daybell's property. Prosecutors also charged the couple in connection with the October 2019 death of Chad Daybell's late wife, Tammy Daybell.

Both defendants have pleaded not guilty and are being tried separately. Vallow Daybell's trial began this month, and Chad Daybell's trial is still months away. Vallow Daybell faces up to life in prison if convicted.

A police detective from Rexburg, Idaho was the only witness to take the stand Tuesday. Detective Ray Hermosillo explained how the investigation started — with a call from an Arizona law enforcement agency seeking help to track down a vehicle that was suspected in an attempted shooting — as well the condition of the children's bodies when they were unearthed eight months later.

At one point, Vallow Daybell's defense attorneys asked the judge if she could be excused from the rest of the day's testimony, saying the graphic evidence that was to be shown would be detrimental to her already fraught mental health.

Seventh District Judge Steven Boyce has twice ordered Vallow Daybell to undergo mental health treatment after finding her incompetent to assist in her own defense at various points since her arrest. Still, Boyce rejected the request, saying her presence in the courtroom was needed to ensure a fair trial for all involved.

The evidence that followed was exceedingly graphic and included a series of photographs showing the children's remains as they were excavated from Daybell's property and pictures taken during the subsequent autopsies.

In one, JJ was wearing red pajamas and socks, duct tape covering his mouth and binding his arms and legs together. His arms were visibly bruised, Hermosillo said, and his body had partially decomposed. Black plastic covered his remains, which were buried near a tree on Daybell's property.

Tylee's remains were destroyed and burned, packed into a melted green bucket and buried at a different location on the property, Hermosillo said. Prosecutors had him describe pieces of the remains as shown in a series of photos.

During the testimony, JJ's grandfather Larry Woodcock sobbed from his seat in the courtroom gallery. Larry and Kay Woodcock were close to their grandson, and had grown worried in 2019 after the boy became increasingly difficult to reach by phone. Kay Woodcock asked police to perform a welfare check on JJ that November, and that's when authorities discovered both children were missing.

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Several other family members of the victims were also in Boise to attend the trial. Tylee's aunt, Annie Cushing, was at the courthouse on Tuesday with her daughter, Tylee's cousin. Charles Vallow's adult sons also attended.

Earlier Tuesday, Madison County Prosecutor Rob Wood questioned Hermosillo about the initial steps of the investigation.

The case was sparked by a Nov. 1, 2019 call from police in Gilbert, Arizona, Hermosillo said. The agency wanted help from Rexburg police to perform surveillance on the couple and seize a Jeep Wrangler suspected of being used in an attempted shooting. On Monday, jurors heard testimony from an Arizona man who had recently divorced Vallow Daybell's niece. Brandon Boudreaux said someone driving a Jeep Wrangler shot at him outside his home, and the Jeep resembled one that belonged to Tylee.

Investigators surveilled Vallow Daybell's apartment in Idaho and snapped photos of Vallow Daybell and Chad Daybell entering and leaving, Hermosillo said, and spotted the Jeep on Nov. 4. But they never saw any kids at the home, and were surprised when the Arizona officers showed up two weeks later and told them about JJ and Tylee.

Kay Woodcock requested a welfare check on JJ on Nov. 25 of 2019, and Hermosillo said Chad Daybell and Vallow Daybell's brother Alex Cox acted suspiciously when investigators asked them about the kids.

JJ and Tylee were added to a national registry of missing children in December of 2019. The last known proof-of-life came in snapshots, Hermosillo said — one taken of Tylee in the western part of Yellowstone National Park in early September and one taken of JJ sitting on a couch later that month.

Vallow Daybell never reported her two youngest children missing, Hermosillo told jurors, and defied a court order to show them to police.

On Monday, prosecutors attempted to paint Vallow Daybell as a woman who would do anything to remove obstacles — including her own kids — to her relationship with Chad Daybell. They said she conspired in the death of Chad's previous wife Tammy Daybell, who died in October 2019. Tammy Daybell's death was initially reported as being from natural causes, but authorities had her body exhumed and an autopsy determined she died of asphyxiation.

Defense attorneys suggested prosecutors didn't know what had happened and pointed to language in the murder charges that accused Vallow Daybell of either directing, encouraging, ordering or participating in the deaths. A reasonable jury would have to find her not guilty, her attorney Archibald said.

Prosecutors also described extreme religious beliefs that they said Vallow Daybell and Daybell promoted. They said the pair claimed to be able to tell if people were possessed by dark spirits, that some possessions turned the inhabitant into a "zombie," and that the only way to save a zombie's soul was by killing the person's body.

Friends of Vallow Daybell will testify that she said the children and Tammy Daybell were "dark" before their deaths, Prosecutor Lindsey Blake said. At least one friend told police that Vallow Daybell called both children "zombies" before they disappeared, according to police records.

Brittney Griner working on memoir about Russian captivity

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Saying she is ready to share the "unfathomable" experience of being arrested and incarcerated in Russia, basketball star Brittney Griner is working on a memoir that is scheduled for spring 2024.

Griner was arrested last year at the airport in Moscow on drug-related charges and detained for nearly 10 months, much of that time in prison. Her plight unfolded at the same time Russia invaded Ukraine and further heightened tensions between Russia and the U.S., ending only after she was freed in exchange for the notorious Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout.

A WNBA All-Star with the Phoenix Mercury, Griner had flown to Moscow in February 2022 to rejoin UMMC Ekaterinburg, a Russian women's team she has played for in the off-season since 2014.

"That day (in February) was the beginning of an unfathomable period in my life which only now am I

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ready to share," Griner said in a statement released Tuesday by Alfred A. Knopf.

"The primary reason I traveled back to Russia for work that day was because I wanted to make my wife, family, and teammates proud. After an incredibly challenging 10 months in detainment, I am grateful to have been rescued and to be home. Readers will hear my story and understand why I'm so thankful for the outpouring of support from people across the world."

Griner added that she also hoped her book would raise awareness of other Americans detained overseas, including Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, arrested in Russia last month and accused of espionage; businessman Kai Li, serving a 10-year sentence in China on charges of revealing state secrets to the FBI; and Paul Whelan, a corporate security executive imprisoned in Russia on spying charges. Around the time Griner was released, Whelan criticized the U.S. government for not doing enough to help him.

Russia has been a popular playing destination for top WNBA athletes in the offseason, with some earning salaries over \$1 million — nearly quadruple what they can make as a base WNBA salary. Despite pleading guilty to possessing canisters with cannabis oil, a result of what she said was hasty packing, Griner still faced trial under Russian law.

Griner's memoir is currently untitled and will eventually be published in a young adult edition. Financial terms were not disclosed.

In Tuesday's press statement, Knopf said that the book would be "intimate and moving" and that Griner would disclose "in vivid detail her harrowing experience of her wrongful detainment (as classified by the State Department) and the difficulty of navigating the byzantine Russian legal system in a language she did not speak."

"Griner also describes her stark and surreal time living in a foreign prison and the terrifying aspects of day-to-day life in a women's penal colony," the announcement reads. "At the heart of the book, Griner highlights the personal turmoil she experienced during the near ten-month ordeal and the resilience that carried her through to the day of her return to the United States last December."

Griner, 32, is a 6-foot-9 two-time Olympic gold medalist, three-time All-American at Baylor University, a prominent advocate for pay equity for women athletes and the first openly gay athlete to reach an endorsement deal with Nike. She is the author of one previous book, "In My Skin: My Life On and Off the Basketball Court," published in 2014.

In February, she re-signed with the Mercury and will play in its upcoming season, which runs from May through September.

3 hurt in floor collapse in Savannah's 1899 US courthouse

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — Three construction workers were injured Tuesday when part of an upper floor collapsed inside Savannah's 124-year-old federal courthouse, which has been undergoing extensive renovations for more than a year.

All three workers were taken to a hospital, none of them with life-threatening injuries, after part of the courthouse's third floor gave way and the workers tumbled down to the floor below, said Savannah Fire Battalion Chief Wayne Ifill. Everyone else inside the building was accounted for and not injured, he said.

"We went through the building twice to make sure," Ifill said. "Now we know for a fact that it's completely empty. And they're not allowed to go back in it until they have a structural engineer come and do a good, solid assessment of the building."

The Tomochichi Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse opened in 1899 on Wright Square in the heart of Savannah's downtown historic district. It was named more than a century later for the chief of the Yamacraw people, a small band of Native Americans who befriended the colonial English settlers that founded Georgia in 1773.

The building is in the middle of a \$75 million renovation scheduled for completion next year and has been essentially gutted on the inside, Ifill said. But it's unclear why roughly 30 square feet (2.8 square meters) of the floor collapsed. No courthouse personnel were inside.

"It could have been a lot worse," Ifill said.

Workers in hardhats huddled on street corners Tuesday afternoon outside the courthouse, where scaffolding covers portions of the building's exterior.

There didn't appear to be any threat of the exterior walls collapsing, according to Ifill. Still, the street along the south side of the courthouse, nearest where the floor fell in, was closed until structural engineers confirm the rest of the building isn't at risk. It was not immediately known how quickly that inspection would occur.

Arizona court upholds clergy privilege in child abuse case

By MICHAEL REZENDES and JASON DEAREN Associated Press

The Arizona Supreme Court has ruled that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can refuse to answer questions or turn over documents under a state law that exempts religious officials from having to report child sex abuse if they learn of the crime during a confessional setting.

The ruling was issued April 7 but not released to the public until Tuesday. A lawsuit filed by child sex abuse victims accuses the church, widely known as the Mormon church, two of its bishops, and other church members of conspiracy and negligence in not reporting church member Paul Adams for abusing his older daughter as early as 2010. This negligence, the lawsuit argues, allowed Adams to continue abusing the girl for as many as seven years, a time in which he also abused the girl's infant sister.

Lynne Cadigan, an attorney for the Adams children who filed the lawsuit, criticized the court's ruling.

"Unfortunately, this ruling expands the clergy privilege beyond what the legislature intended by allowing churches to conceal crimes against children," she said.

In a statement, the church concurred with the court's action.

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints agrees with the Arizona Supreme Court's decision," the statement said. "We are deeply saddened by the abuse these children suffered. The Church has no tolerance of abuse of any kind."

Adams had also posted videos of himself sexually abusing his daughters on the internet, boasted of the abuse on social media, and confessed to federal law enforcement agents, who arrested him in 2017 with no help from the church.

Those actions prompted Cochise County Superior Court Judge Laura Cardinal to rule on Aug. 8, 2022, that Adams had waived his right to keep his 2010 confession to Bishop John Herrod secret.

"Taken together, Adams' overt acts demonstrate a lack of repentance and a profound disregard" for the principles of the church, Cardinal said in her ruling. "His acts can only be characterized as a waiver of the clergy penitent privilege."

Clergy in Arizona, as in many other states, are required to report information about child sexual abuse or neglect to law enforcement or child welfare authorities. An exception to that law — known as the clergy-penitent privilege — allows members of the clergy who learn of the abuse through spiritual confessions to keep the information secret.

The church has based its defense in the lawsuit on the privilege, asserting that Herrod and a second bishop who learned of Adams' confession, Robert "Kim" Mauzy, had no legal obligation to report him for abusing his older daughter and appealed Cardinal's ruling.

On Dec. 15, the Arizona Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the church, saying it did not have to turn over disciplinary records for Adams, who was excommunicated in 2013. The Appeals Court also ruled that a church official who attended a church disciplinary hearing could refuse to answer questions from the plaintiff's attorneys during pretrial testimony, based on the clergy-penitent privilege.

Lawyers representing the Adams girls and one of their brothers took the case to the Arizona Supreme Court, where they did not prevail, according to the April ruling.

In an unusual move, Cadigan said attorneys for the three Adams children intend to file a motion asking the Supreme Court to reconsider its ruling.

An Associated Press investigation of the clergy privilege shows it exists in 33 states and that the Mormon

church, often joined by the Catholic Church, Jehovah's Witnesses and other faiths, have successfully lobbied against attempts to reform or eliminate it.

Ex-firefighter gets prison for Jan. 6 extinguisher attack

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

A retired firefighter who threw a fire extinguisher at police officers during the U.S. Capitol riot was sentenced on Tuesday to more than four years in prison.

Robert Sanford struck two police officers in the head with the fire extinguisher that he threw as he stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, with a mob of Donald Trump supporters. He also threw an orange traffic cone at a Capitol police sergeant.

"Sanford also hurled obscenities and insults at the law enforcement officers on the Lower West Terrace, calling them 'traitors,'" a prosecutor, Janani Iyengar, wrote in a court filing.

One of the officers struck by the fire extinguisher had a bump and swelling on his head; the other had a headache and went to a hospital for a medical exam, prosecutors said.

U.S. District Judge Paul Friedman sentenced Sanford to four years and four months in prison followed by three years of supervised release, according to an online court record. Federal prosecutors had recommended a prison sentence of five years and 11 months.

Sanford, 57, of Boothwyn, Pennsylvania, worked as a firefighter for 26 years before retiring in 2020. A fire extinguisher is "an instrument that he was uniquely familiar with and should have known how much damage it could cause," the prosecutor wrote.

Sanford traveled to Washington, D.C., with friends from Pennsylvania on bus trip organized by the conservative activist group Turning Point USA. He listened to speeches at Trump's "Stop the Steal" rally before joining the crowd that marched over to the Capitol and disrupted the joint session of Congress for certifying Democrat Joe Biden's electoral victory over Trump.

Sanford was arrested on Jan. 14, 2021. He has been jailed since he pleaded guilty last September to assaulting, resisting or impeding police officers using a dangerous weapon — a felony punishable by a maximum of 20 years in prison. He wasn't accused of entering the Capitol building on Jan. 6.

Sanford began to work with a specialist in cult deprogramming in August 2022 and was confronted with "facts" about the baseless conspiracy theory that Democrats stole the 2020 presidential election from Trump, according to defense attorney Andrew Stewart.

"Even after he was incarcerated, he participated in regular discussions designed to challenge his ideology and belief structure, then help him understand how and why he developed the beliefs that led him to make the decisions that he did on January 6," Stewart wrote in a court filing.

Sanford believed that police had attacked him and others without provocation when he picked up and threw what felt like an empty fire extinguisher, his lawyer said.

"Certainly, this is not a justification for his action nor is it intended to be," Stewart wrote.

More than 1,000 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the Jan. 6 riot. Over 600 of them have pleaded guilty or been convicted after trials decided by a jury or judge. Over 450 of them have been sentenced, with over half getting terms of imprisonment ranging from seven days to 10 years.

More than 100 police officers were injured during the Jan. 6 riot.

Also on Tuesday, a Nevada man who joined other rioters in assaulting police officers in a tunnel on the Lower West Terrace was sentenced to six years in prison. U.S. District Court Judge Carl J. Nichols also ordered Josiah Kenyon, 35, of Winnemucca, Nevada, to pay over \$43,000 in restitution for damaging a window at the Capitol on Jan. 6.

Kenyon was dressed as the character Jack Skellington from the movie "The Nightmare Before Christmas" when he joined the mob's attack. He used a table leg with a protruding nail to strike an officer in the leg and hit a second officer so hard that it lodged in the officer's face shield and helmet, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors recommended a prison sentence of seven years and four months for Kenyon, who pleaded guilty to assault charges in September 2022.

Kenyon drove to Washington from Reno, Nevada with his wife and young children to attend Trump's

rally. Kenyon told FBI agents that he hated Trump and went to the Capitol because he was "trying to raise the violence level," prosecutors wrote, adding, "His idea was to have 'the Trumpers' charge the police line which would in turn cause the officers to shoot the rioters."

Manhattan DA sues Jim Jordan over Trump indictment inquiry

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg sued Rep. Jim Jordan on Tuesday, an extraordinary move as he seeks to halt a House Judiciary Committee inquiry that the prosecutor contends is a "transparent campaign to intimidate and attack" him over his indictment of former President Donald Trump.

Bragg, a Democrat, is asking a judge to invalidate subpoenas that Jordan, the committee's Republican chair, has issued or plans to issue as part of an investigation of Bragg's handling of the case, the first criminal prosecution of a former U.S. president.

U.S. District Judge Mary Kay Vyskocil, a Trump appointee who previously served as a federal bankruptcy court judge, declined Tuesday to take immediate action on the lawsuit. She scheduled an initial hearing for April 19 in Manhattan, the day before the committee plans to question, under subpoena, a top former prosecutor who was involved in the Trump probe.

Bragg's lawsuit, a forceful escalation after weeks of sparring with Jordan and other Republican lawmakers in letters and media statements, seeks to end what it says is a "constitutionally destructive fishing expedition" that threatens the sovereignty and integrity of a state-level prosecution.

"Congress lacks any valid legislative purpose to engage in a free-ranging campaign of harassment in retaliation for the District Attorney's investigation and prosecution of Mr. Trump under the laws of New York," the lawsuit says, citing the lack of authority in the Constitution for Congress "to oversee, let alone disrupt, ongoing state law criminal matters."

In response, Jordan tweeted Tuesday: "First, they indict a president for no crime. Then they sue to block congressional oversight when we ask questions about the federal funds they say they used to do it."

The Judiciary Committee recently issued a subpoena seeking testimony from a Mark Pomerantz, the former prosecutor who previously oversaw the Trump investigation and sparred with Bragg over the direction of the probe before leaving the office last year. Pomerantz, who has declined to cooperate with the committee, is under subpoena to testify at a deposition on April 20 unless Vyskocil intervenes. The committee has also sought documents and testimony from the DA's office but Bragg has rejected those requests.

The committee is scheduled to hold a hearing in Manhattan on Monday on crime in New York City and what it alleges are Bragg's "pro-crime, anti-victim" policies. The DA's office, however, points to statistics showing that violent crime in Manhattan has dropped since Bragg took office in January 2022.

In response, Bragg said that if Jordan, who is from Ohio, "really cared about public safety," he would travel to some of the major cities in his home state, where crime is reportedly higher than in New York.

Bragg is represented in the lawsuit by Theodore Boutros, a well-known First Amendment lawyer who has also represented Trump's estranged niece, Mary Trump, in legal clashes with her famous uncle.

Vyskocil previously made headlines when she dismissed a defamation lawsuit brought against Fox News host Tucker Carlson by former Playboy model Karen McDougal, who was paid \$150,000 through the National Enquirer to keep quiet about an alleged sexual encounter with Trump. In on-air remarks, Carlson called the payoff "a classic case of extortion," but Vyskocil ruled in 2020 that the conservative commentator was engaging in "rhetorical hyperbole and opinion commentary" and that he was not "stating actual facts."

In his lawsuit, Bragg said he's taking legal action "in response to an unprecedentedly brazen and unconstitutional attack by members of Congress on an ongoing New York State criminal prosecution and investigation of former President Donald J. Trump."

Trump was indicted on March 30 with 34 felony counts of falsifying business records related to hush-money payments made during the 2016 campaign to bury allegations that he had extramarital sexual encounters. He has denied wrongdoing and pleaded not guilty at an arraignment last week in Manhattan.

Republicans have been railing against Bragg even before Trump's indictment, with Jordan leading the cause by issuing a series of letters and subpoenas to individuals involved with the case. Pomerantz refused to voluntarily cooperate with the committee's request last month at the instruction of Bragg's office, citing the ongoing investigation.

Jordan sees Pomerantz and Carey Dunne, who were top deputies tasked with running the investigation on a day-to-day basis, as catalysts for Bragg's decision to move ahead with the hush money case.

Bragg's lawsuit sets up what is an already tenuous fight over the scope and limits of congressional oversight powers into new territory. House Republicans have argued that because the Manhattan case involves campaign finance and what prosecutors say was a conspiracy to undermine the integrity of the 2016 election, Congress has direct oversight.

Many expected that Jordan would subpoena Bragg by now but it appears the forceful back-and-forth between the two elected officials has come to a head. Jordan's committee has come hard at Bragg, but a court fight over a committee subpoena could impede its momentum and amplify criticism among Democrats that the panel is playing politics instead of addressing substantive issues.

Amiri reported from Washington. Associated Press reporter Larry Neumeister in New York contributed to this report.

On Twitter, follow Michael Sisak at twitter.com/mikesisak and Farnoush Amiri at twitter.com/Farnoush-Amiri. Send confidential tips by visiting <https://www.ap.org/tips/>.

Criminal probe focuses on school where boy, 6, shot teacher

By BEN FINLEY and DENISE LAVOIE Associated Press

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (AP) — Prosecutors in the Virginia city where a 6-year-old shot his teacher in an elementary school classroom are investigating whether the "actions or omissions" of any school employees could lead to criminal charges, according to court documents released Tuesday.

Howard Gwynn, the commonwealth's attorney in Newport News, filed a petition for a special grand jury to probe if any "security failures" contributed to the shooting at Richneck Elementary in January that seriously wounded teacher Abby Zwerner.

Gwynn wrote that an investigation could also lead to recommendations "in the hopes that such a situation never occurs again."

Gwynn's petition was released a day after his office charged the boy's mother with felony child neglect and a misdemeanor count of endangering a child by reckless storage of a firearm. The child used his mother's 9mm handgun to shoot Zwerner. Police say the weapon was legally purchased.

Last week, Zwerner filed a \$40 million lawsuit against the school system, accusing school officials of gross negligence and of ignoring multiple warnings from teachers and other school employees that the boy had taken a gun to school on the day of the shooting.

Zwerner also alleges that school officials knew the boy "had a history of random violence" at school and at home, including that he "strangled and choked" his kindergarten teacher.

"Our lawsuit makes clear that we believe the school division violated state law, and we are pursuing this in civil court," Diane Toscano, an attorney for Zwerner, said Monday.

The prosecutor's decision to investigate school employees for any criminal activity is the latest fallout from the shooting, which sent shockwaves through Newport News, a shipbuilding city of about 185,000 people near the Chesapeake Bay.

Days after the shooting, school officials revealed that Richneck administrators suspected the child may have had a weapon, but they didn't find it despite searching his backpack.

Parents and teachers lambasted administrators, saying students who assault classmates and staff rarely face consequences, and that Zwerner's shooting could have been prevented if not for a toxic environment in which teachers' concerns are ignored.

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It is not the first school shooting to spark a criminal investigation into school officials, although they are quite rare, experts said. Civil suits are far more common, but have varying degrees of success.

For instance, authorities in Florida accused a former school resource officer of hiding during the Parkland school massacre in 2018. Scot Peterson was charged with negligence for not entering the building during the rampage that left 17 people dead. Peterson has said he did the best he could; his trial is scheduled to start next month.

In 2021, the families of the people killed in Parkland, most of the wounded and others reached a \$25 million settlement with the Broward County school district in a negligence lawsuit.

A prosecutor in Michigan criticized Oxford High's decision in 2021 to keep a teenager in school before he killed four students, stating that an investigation would determine if any school officials should be charged. No school employees have been charged.

A civil suit was filed over the Oxford shooting. But a judge ruled that school staff and administrators cannot be sued and dismissed Oxford Community Schools from lawsuits, citing governmental immunity.

After the massacre at Columbine High School in 1999, a federal judge threw out all but one of the lawsuits against the school district and sheriff's office, ruling that the gunmen were responsible. The daughter of a teacher who bled to death reached a \$1.5 million settlement in her lawsuit against the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

In Uvalde, Texas, where a gunman killed 19 students and two teachers at Robb Elementary School last May, some parents filed a federal lawsuit against the school district, the school principal, the fired school police chief and others.

The police response to the shooting was sharply criticized as nearly 400 officers responded, but waited more than an hour before confronting and killing the gunman. Litigation is ongoing.

Chuck Vergon, a professor of educational law and policy at the University of Michigan-Flint, said it is rare for a teacher or school official to be charged in a school shooting because allegations of criminal negligence can be difficult to prove. More often, he said, those impacted by school shootings seek to hold school officials liable in civil court.

Vergon, who has been studying school shootings and liability for about seven years, said he thinks the increase in the number of school shootings combined with hundreds of new school safety laws passed after Parkland could lead to more civil actions to hold school officials accountable.

"Those laws begin to make more explicit the duties of schools and school districts in terms of preparing for and hopefully preventing or minimizing school shootings," Vergon said.

In the wake of the Newport News shooting, the school board fired the district's superintendent, and Richneck's assistant principal resigned. The elementary school's principal is still employed by the district but no longer holds that position.

James Ellenson, the attorney for the 6-year-old's mother, said she has no criminal record and will turn herself in before the end of the week. Ellenson did not comment on the charges, but he has said her gun was secured on a top shelf in her closet and had a trigger lock.

The family has said the boy has an "acute disability" and was under a care plan that included his mother or father accompanying him to class every day. The week of the shooting was the first when a parent was not in class with him, the family said.

Michelle Price, a spokeswoman for Newport News Public Schools, declined to comment.

This story has been corrected to show Chuck Vergon is a professor at University of Michigan-Flint, not Michigan State University-Flint.

Associated Press reporter Curt Anderson in Tampa, Florida, contributed to this story.

Abortion questions intensify in US courts, legislatures

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

New court rulings could spark more change for U.S. abortion policy, which has been in flux since last June when the Supreme Court overturned the nationwide right to an abortion.

Courts are considering big changes, including some with broad implications, as state legislatures enact more restrictions or outright bans.

Here's what's happening:

ABORTION PILLS: WHAT'S NEW?

The majority of abortions in the U.S. are obtained using a combination of two medications. Anti-abortion groups have been trying to limit access to one of them.

In dueling decisions last Friday, two federal courts issued conflicting rulings about whether one of the drugs, mifepristone, should remain available.

In a first-of-its kind ruling, a federal judge in Amarillo, Texas, blocked the Food and Drug Administration's approval of the drug, which dates back to the year 2000. The same day, a federal judge in Spokane, Washington, ordered the FDA not to do anything that might block mifepristone's availability in 17 Democrat-led states suing to keep it on the market. The states are: Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington, plus the District of Columbia.

ABORTION PILLS: WHAT'S NEXT?

President Joe Biden's administration has asked a court to block the Texas ruling from taking effect as scheduled Saturday. It also asked the Washington court for clarity on its ruling.

Whichever side loses in either case will almost certainly appeal, ultimately all the way to the nation's highest court.

In the meantime, some Democrat-controlled states are stockpiling abortion pills, including New York, which announced plans to do so Tuesday, while Wyoming last month became the first state to explicitly prohibit abortion drugs.

OTHER COURTS: WHAT'S NEW?

Across the U.S., advocates have sued over dozens of abortion laws.

In 2019, the Iowa Supreme Court blocked a law prohibiting abortion once cardiac activity can be detected, which occurs after about six weeks of pregnancy and often before women know they are pregnant. Officials in the Republican-dominated state have been pushing to overturn that ruling.

On Tuesday, the issue went before the state Supreme Court, which is now made up entirely of seven Republican appointees. A new decision is expected this summer.

Also on Tuesday, a Montana judge denied Planned Parenthood of Montana's request to preemptively block legislation before it's signed that would ban dilation and evacuation abortions, the kind most commonly used in the second trimester of pregnancy. Opponents said they wanted to act quickly because the law would take effect immediately if Gov. Greg Gianforte signs it. Gianforte has previously approved other abortion restrictions.

LAWMAKERS: WHAT'S NEXT?

Nebraska lawmakers are expected to start debate Wednesday on a bill that would ban abortion once cardiac activity can be detected.

In February, the South Carolina Senate passed such a ban. The same month, the House approved one that would apply throughout pregnancy. The two chambers have not yet negotiated which version to send to the governor.

In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is expected to run for the GOP presidential nomination next year, has supported ending abortion access earlier than the 15-week mark currently in effect there. The state

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Senate has approved a ban after six weeks' gestation. The measure could win House approval and be sent to DeSantis as soon as this week.

LAWMAKERS: WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENED?

Abortion is already effectively banned at all stages of pregnancy in 13 states, and when cardiac activity can be detected in one.

Courts have blocked bans throughout pregnancy in another five states, and in one where the cut-off for the procedure is when cardiac activity can be detected.

Republicans in those places and others are pushing for even tougher policies.

This month, Idaho Gov. Brad Little signed a law making it a crime for an adult to help a minor get an abortion without parental consent.

Iowa's attorney general took another step this month, announcing her office will stop paying for emergency contraception and abortions for sexual assault victims while it studies the policy.

Mulvihill reported from Cherry Hill, New Jersey. AP reporters Margery Beck contributed from Omaha, Nebraska; Amy Beth Hanson from Helena, Montana; Anthony Izaguirre from Tallahassee, Florida; Scott McFetridge from Des Moines, Iowa; and James Pollard from Columbia, South Carolina.

Key lawmakers win access to mishandled classified docs

By ERIC TUCKER, MICHAEL BALSAMO and NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration has begun sharing with a bipartisan group of lawmakers known as the Gang of Eight classified documents found in the possession of former President Donald Trump, President Joe Biden and former Vice President Mike Pence, according to five people familiar with the matter.

Top lawmakers, including Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, had for months been asking the Justice Department to provide access to the documents — or at least an assessment of what was in them — so that Congress could gauge the potential national security harm.

That process recently got underway, said the people, who insisted on anonymity to discuss private interactions between the Justice Department and Congress.

"They're finally moving. We've got a lot more documents to review and, more importantly, to make sure there was mitigation taken," Warner said Wednesday, adding that the documents were being received on a rolling basis. He said that while he was "glad to see progress," it is "still unacceptable for me that it took this long."

A Justice Department special counsel, Jack Smith, is investigating whether Trump mishandled roughly several hundred documents with classified markings that were taken after his term ended to Mar-a-Lago, the former president's Florida estate, and whether he or his representatives sought to obstruct that probe. Another special counsel, Robert Hur, is also investigating the improper retention of documents from Biden's time as vice president that have been located in his Delaware home and his pre-presidential think-tank office. Biden has said he had no knowledge the documents were there.

A lawyers for Pence also said in January that an apparently small number of papers were inadvertently boxed and transported to his Indiana home at the end of the Trump administration.

Punchbowl News first reported the development.

The Biden administration held a classified briefing on the documents earlier this year for members of Congress, but senators accused the executive branch of stonewalling and insisted that they needed for national security reasons to see for themselves what materials the men had been holding.

The Justice Department had said that it wanted to be cooperative with the lawmakers' demands within the confines of the ongoing investigations.

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick, Zeke Miller and Colleen Long in Washington contributed

to this report.

Ukraine resumes electricity exports despite Russian attacks

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine began resuming electricity exports to European countries on Tuesday, its energy minister said, a dramatic turnaround from six months ago when fierce Russian bombardment of power stations plunged much of the country into darkness in a bid to demoralize the population.

The announcement by Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko that Ukraine was not only meeting domestic consumption demands but also ready to restart exports to its neighbors was a clear message that Moscow's attempt to weaken Ukraine by targeting its infrastructure did not work.

Ukraine's domestic energy demand is "100%" supplied, he told The Associated Press in an interview, and it has reserves to export due to the "titanic work" of its engineers and international partners.

Russia ramped up infrastructure attacks in September, when waves of missiles and exploding drones destroyed about half of Ukraine's energy system. Power cuts were common across the country as temperatures dropped below freezing and tens of millions struggled to keep warm.

Moscow said the strikes were aimed at weakening Ukraine's ability to defend itself, while Western officials said the blackouts that caused civilians to suffer amounted to war crimes. Ukrainians said the timing was designed to destroy their morale as the war marked its first anniversary.

Ukraine had to stop exporting electricity in October to meet domestic needs.

Engineers worked around the clock, often risking their lives to come into work at power plants and keep the electricity flowing. Kyiv's allies also provided help. In December, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced \$53 million in bilateral aid to help the country acquire electricity grid equipment, on top of \$55 million for energy sector support.

Much more work remains to be done, Halushchenko said. Ukraine needs funding to repair damaged generation and transmission lines, and revenue from electricity exports would be one way to do that.

The first country to receive Ukraine's energy exports will be Moldova, he said.

Besides the heroic work by engineers and Western aid, warmer temperatures are enabling the resumption of exports by making domestic demand lower. Nationwide consumption was already down at least 30% due to the war, Halushchenko said, with many industries having to operate with less power.

Renewables like solar and wind power also come into play as temperatures rise, taking some pressure off nuclear and coal-fired power plants.

But it's unclear if Ukraine can keep up exports amid the constant threat of Russian bombardment.

"Unfortunately now a lot of things depend on the war," Halushchenko said. "I would say we feel quite confident now until the next winter."

Exports to Poland, Slovakia and Romania are also on schedule to resume, he said.

"Today we are starting with Moldova, and we are talking about Poland, we are talking about Slovakia and Romania," Halushchenko added, noting that how much will depend on their needs.

"For Poland, we have only one line that allows us to export 200 megawatts, but I think this month we will finish another line which will increase this to an additional 400 MW, so these figures could change," he said.

Export revenue will depend on fluctuating electricity prices in Europe. In 2022, while Ukraine was still able to export energy, Ukrainian companies averaged 40 million to 70 million euros a month depending on prices, Halushchenko said.

"Even if it's 20 (million euros) it's still good money. We need financial resources now to restore generation and transmission lines," he said.

Ukraine has the ability to export more than the 400 megawatt capacity limit imposed by the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity, or ENTSO-E. "We are in negotiations to increase this cap because today we can export even more, we have the necessary reserves in the system," the minister said.

The current capacity limit is in line with what Ukraine was exporting in September 2022 before Ukraine diverted resources to meet domestic needs amid the Russian onslaught.

The 400-megawatt capacity is “only a start” as Ukraine pursues a long-term goal of becoming “truly integrated” into Europe’s network, which would increase its security of supply and help its neighbors exchange electricity, according to Georg Zachmann, energy policy expert at the Bruegel think tank in Brussels.

At a price of 100 euros per megawatt hour, the monthly income stream for Ukraine would at most reach 30 million euros.

As capacity increases, however, concerns will move from supply to commerce and politics due to Ukraine’s coal-fired plants paying almost nothing for carbon emissions, while EU competitors pay 100 euros per ton.

Halushchenko wants to increase the maximum technical capacity to 2 gigawatts. At the very least, he would like exports to meet the country’s import restriction of 850 megawatts, he said. ENTSO-E represents 39 electricity transmission system operators from 35 countries across Europe.

Ukraine began trading electricity with European countries in June, in a bid to move away from Russia’s sphere of influence. Power lines were synchronized in March 2022, shortly after the war began.

Engineers sped up the process to link Ukraine to the continental grid, allowing it to decouple its power system from Russia. Moldova was added later. Before that, Ukraine and Moldova were part of a power sharing system that included Russia and Belarus.

The resumption of exports is an obvious win for Ukraine, but it also benefits Europe, according to energy analyst Olena Pavlenko of the Kyiv-based think tank Dixie Group.

“European consumers need this, it increases competition in the (European) market, lowers prices and feels more energy secure,” she said.

“For Ukraine this is a solution to not just take money in grants and credit but to earn money. This is a good start for the future operation and partnership with the EU, as a business partner,” she added.

David McHugh in Frankfurt, Germany, contributed.

Follow AP coverage of the war in Ukraine at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

Theranos’ Elizabeth Holmes loses bid to stay out of prison

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

Disgraced Theranos CEO Elizabeth Holmes has been rebuffed in her attempt to stay out of federal prison while she appeals her conviction for the fraud she committed while overseeing a blood-testing scam that exposed Silicon Valley’s dark side.

In an 11-page ruling issued late Monday, U.S. District Judge Edward Davila concluded there wasn’t compelling enough evidence to allow Holmes to remain free on bail while her lawyers try to persuade an appeals court that alleged misconduct during her four-month trial led to an unjust verdict.

The judge’s decision means Holmes, 39, will have to surrender to authorities April 27 to start the more than 11-year prison sentence that Davila imposed in November. The punishment came 10 months after a jury found her guilty on four counts of fraud and conspiracy against the Theranos investors who believed in her promises to revolutionize the health care industry.

Holmes had accompanied her lawyers to a San Jose, California, courtroom on March 17 to try to convince Davila that various missteps by federal prosecutors, and the omission of key evidence, will culminate in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals exonerating her.

Holmes’ prison sentence is scheduled to start roughly 20 years after she dropped out of Stanford University when she was 19 years old to start Theranos in Palo Alto, California — the same city where William Hewlett and David Packard founded a company bearing their surnames in a small garage and planted the seeds of what grew into Silicon Valley.

Holmes could still file another appeal of Davila’s latest ruling, a maneuver her co-conspirator at Theranos — Ramesh “Sunny” Balwani — successfully used to delay his scheduled March 16 date to begin a

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nearly 13-year prison sentence. But the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals last week rejected that appeal, and Balwani is now scheduled to report to a Southern California prison on April 20.

Davila has recommended Holmes serve her sentence in a Bryan, Texas, prison. It hasn't yet been publicly confirmed if that will be the facility where she reports.

Unless she can find a way to stay free, Holmes will be separated from the two children she had leading up to the trial and after her conviction.

Her first child, a boy, was born shortly before her trial began in September 2021. The youngest child, whose gender hasn't been disclosed in court documents, was born at some point after her November sentencing. She conceived both with her current partner, William "Billy" Evans, whom she met after breaking up with Balwani in the midst of Theranos' downfall.

The denial of Holmes' request to remain free is the latest twist in a long-running saga that has already been the subject of an acclaimed HBO documentary and an award-winning Hulu TV series.

Although they had separate trials, Holmes and Balwani were accused of essentially the same crimes centered on a ruse touting Theranos' blood-testing system as a breakthrough in health care. The claims helped the company become a Silicon Valley sensation that raised nearly \$1 billion from investors and at one point anointed Holmes with a \$4.5 billion fortune, based on her 50% stake in Theranos.

Holmes also parlayed the buzz surrounding Theranos to speaking engagements on the same stage as former President Bill Clinton and glowing cover stories in business publications that likened her to tech visionaries such as Apple co-founder Steve Jobs.

But Theranos' technology never came close to working like Holmes and Balwani boasted, resulting in the company's scandalous collapse and a criminal case that shined a bright light on Silicon Valley greed and hubris.

This story has been corrected to fix the spelling of the location where the judge has recommended that Holmes serve her sentence. It is located in Bryan, Texas, not Byron, Texas.

Domestic unrest interrupts Macron's European future speech

By MIKE CORDER and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron laid out his vision of a bold, assertive European future on Tuesday, but not before simmering anger at his domestic pension reforms boiled over once more as he began his speech in the Netherlands.

Some members of the audience at a theater in The Hague shouted at Macron, accusing him of undemocratically forcing through his plan to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64.

Macron's pension reforms have prompted massive protests and strikes in France. Critics were additionally infuriated when he used a special constitutional power last month to push the bill through parliament without a vote.

Some protesters in The Hague theater Tuesday brandished a banner calling Macron the "president of violence and hypocrisy."

"I can answer these questions if you give me some time," Macron responded, speaking in English. The protesters were quickly removed from the hall.

It's "very important to have this type of discussion," an unflustered Macron said. "The day you consider that 'when I disagree ... I'm the one to decide' ... you put democracy at risk," he added, citing the examples of rioters storming the U.S. Capitol in 2021 and Brazil's top government buildings earlier this year.

Earlier in the day, before Macron laid a wreath at the national monument in Amsterdam, a small group of people protesting Macron's pension reforms briefly held up a banner in French that said: "We will not be beaten into retirement." More protesters also demonstrated peacefully outside the theater in The Hague where he made his speech.

In his scripted speech, Macron outlined his vision for the future of European sovereignty, saying it should be based on the five pillars of competitiveness, industrial policy, protectionism, reciprocity and cooperation.

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Russia's war in Ukraine "opened probably one of the most perilous times of our European union. Our union is said to grow stronger through crisis but never had we faced such a threat," Macron said.

Both the COVID-19 pandemic and the war "were big accelerators of this European sovereignty," he added. "We can set up a new economic doctrine which will allow us to reconcile creating jobs, financing our social model, dealing with climate change and being more sovereign and deciding for ourselves," he said. "This is critical in this period when we have war and our economy is being weaponized."

The speech in The Hague came after Macron raised eyebrows with his comments on Taiwan after his recent visit to China.

"The question we need to answer, as Europeans, is the following: Is it in our interest to accelerate (a crisis) on Taiwan? No," Macron was quoted as saying in an interview published Sunday in French newspaper *Les Echos* and by *Politico Europe*.

"The worst thing would be to think that we Europeans must become followers on this topic and take our cue from the U.S. agenda and a Chinese overreaction."

The remarks raised questions about whether Macron's views are in line with the European Union's position and whether the bloc of 27 is able to become the "third superpower" that Macron says he hopes to build within "a few years."

The interview was given on Friday, before China launched large-scale combat exercises around Taiwan that simulated sealing off the island in response to the Taiwanese president's trip to the U.S. last week.

China and Taiwan split in 1949 after a civil war. The government in Beijing says the island is obliged to rejoin the mainland, by force if necessary.

Macron emphasized the concept of "strategic autonomy" for Europe which he has promoted for years. He warned of what he called the "trap" that would lead to the bloc "getting caught up in crises that are not ours." His speech in The Hague also called for Europe to become ever more self-sufficient to avoid becoming reliant on other powerful trading partners.

Macron's two-day trip to Amsterdam and The Hague is the first state visit by a French leader since Jacques Chirac 23 years ago and underscores the close links between the Netherlands and France and the two leaders.

After arriving in Amsterdam, Macron — with Dutch King Willem-Alexander — inspected a guard of honor on the square outside the capital's royal palace as a military band played and the French and Dutch flags fluttered in a brisk breeze.

In the evening, Macron and his wife, Brigitte, returned to Amsterdam for a banquet hosted by Willem-Alexander.

On Wednesday, Macron's itinerary includes visiting a science park in Amsterdam, talks with Prime Minister Mark Rutte and viewing a blockbuster exhibition of paintings by Dutch Master Johannes Vermeer at the Rijksmuseum.

Corbet reported from Paris. Peter Dejong contributed from Amsterdam.

Why are there so many good TV shows to watch right now?

By ALICIA RANCILIO Associated Press

Picture May 17, 2001. In the final seconds of the season seven finale of "Friends," Jennifer Aniston's Rachel reveals she's pregnant — but who's the father? This was a classic May sweeps cliffhanger, luring viewers and reaping advertising dollars for NBC.

Most shows used to kick off in the fall, air big episodes in November and February, and go out with a bang in May. Baby announcements, marriage proposals and sudden deaths were just a few of the popular plot twists used in spring season finales to hook viewers and build anticipation for the fall season.

Network television still largely follows that model, but the streamers and premium cable competitors of the new guard tend to operate with different goals. Rather than angling for ratings, those companies are releasing new seasons of popular TV shows — "Ted Lasso," "Succession," "The Mandalorian," "The Last

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of Us," and "Yellowjackets" — with an eye to Primetime Emmy Award recognition.

Everyone wants to be fresh in the minds of voters, said Joyce Eng, a senior editor of the Hollywood awards-centric website Gold Derby.

"A lot of networks, streamers and campaigners will capitalize on recency bias," she said.

For a TV series to be eligible for a Primetime Emmy, it must air between June 1 and May 31 of the following year. Six episodes of a returning season need to air by May 31 to qualify for a series category. The cast and crew then cross their fingers for nominations, which this year will be announced July 12, followed by the Emmy telecast on September 18, when the awards are handed out.

Limited series have to air all their episodes by May 31 in order to be eligible for nomination. In March, Amazon Prime's highly anticipated "Daisy Jones & The Six" dropped its 10 episodes in four batches.

It can be a scramble for shows to finish by the end of May: "Ted Lasso" on Apple TV+ drops its final episode of season three, and maybe the entire series, on May 31. The fifth and final season of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" returns on Amazon on April 14 and swiftly wraps by May 26.

If a returning series does not release six episodes of its season by the May 31 deadline, the remaining "hanging" episodes can be nominated in categories that only require a single episode to enter, such as guest actor.

Season three of "The Handmaid's Tale" premiered June 5, 2019 — which was too late for Emmy eligibility that year. Rather than sit the year out though, "they found a loophole," Eng said. They submitted three episodes that had aired in 2018 during the previous season for individual achievement categories, and earned 11 nominations.

When it comes to scheduling, network and streamer executives maintain tight control over the release-date calendar.

"They choose when we go," said Rob Eric, chief creative officer and executive producer of Scout Productions, behind the Emmy-winning reality series "Queer Eye." This year, he has four series premiering right before the deadline.

"We can make suggestions, but really they're in charge of how that rollout looks," he said of the platforms.

Release dates are not always entirely about potential accolades.

"Sometimes a series is released because it's timely and speaks to what's happening in the world," said Tony Phelan, who created "A Small Light" with Joan Rater. The NatGeo series tells the story of Miep Gies, who helped hide Anne Frank and her family.

"It's in direct response to what's happening in the world, specifically in America in terms of division and the rise in nationalism and antisemitism," Phelan said of the show.

Still, to end the show in time for award eligibility, "A Small Light" will release two episodes each week on National Geographic, premiering May 1 and ending May 31.

"How did that happen?" Phelan asked in mock surprise of the reason behind the show's timeline.

It should be noted that shows released in late summer and fall can still garner attention from awards committees — just a little later. Netflix dropped all nine episodes of "Squid Game" in September 2021 — and it was still nominated for last year's Emmy Awards, including best drama series. Lee Jung-jae also won best actor in a drama series, making history as the first person to win in the drama category for a non-English speaking role.

The critically acclaimed and popular series "The Bear" debuted its first season last June, but it was too late for the 2022 Emmy Awards. By premiering in the summer though, the Hulu show shined and wasn't drowned out by competitors. And the Emmy Awards aren't everything: Star Jeremy Allen White cleaned up at the Golden Globes, where he won best actor in a musical or comedy series.

"There are just so many shows, so many streaming services, and people don't have the time," Eng said. "From the studio and network standpoint, maybe you should pull something like 'The Bear' and drop it in the summer and build that momentum because that was a word-of-mouth hit."

Still, some award shows reign supreme.

Eric Korsh, the president of Scout Productions, distilled the value of award recognition: The Emmys, he said, "are about defining the best in television."

Need a hand picking what to watch first? Visit <https://apnews.com/hub/tv>

STDs are on the rise. This morning-after-style pill may help

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. health officials released data Tuesday showing how chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis cases have been accelerating, but doctors are hoping an old drug will help fight the sexually transmitted infections.

Experts believe STDs have been rising because of declining condom use, inadequate sex education and reduced testing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Millions of Americans are infected each year. Rates are highest in men who have sex with men, and among Black and Hispanic Americans and Native Americans.

"Sexually transmitted infections are an enormous, low-priority public health problem. And they've been a low-priority problem for decades, in spite of the fact that they are the most commonly reported kind of infectious disease," said Dr. John M. Douglas Jr., a retired health official who lectures at the Colorado School of Public Health.

To try to turn the tide, many doctors see promise in doxycycline, a cheap antibiotic that has been sold for more than 50 years.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is drafting recommendations for using it as a kind of morning-after pill for preventing STDs, said Dr. Leandro Mena, director of the agency's STD prevention division.

The drug is already used to treat a range of infections. A study published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine showed its potential to prevent sexually transmitted infections.

In the study, about 500 gay men, bisexual men and transgender women in Seattle and San Francisco with previous STD infections took one doxycycline pill within 72 hours of unprotected sex. Those who took the pills were about 90% less likely to get chlamydia, about 80% less likely to get syphilis, and more than 50% less likely to get gonorrhea compared with people who did not take the pills after sex, the researchers found.

The study was led by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco and built on a similar French study that saw promise in the idea.

"We do need new approaches, new innovations" to help bring sexually transmitted infections under control, said Dr. Philip Andrew Chan, who is consulting with the CDC on the doxycycline recommendations.

Mena, of the CDC, said there is no sign the STD trend is slowing.

Mississippi had the highest rate of gonorrhea cases, according to 2021 CDC data released Tuesday. Alaska saw a sharp increase in its chlamydia case rate that allowed it to overtake Mississippi at the top of that list. South Dakota had the highest rate of early-stage syphilis.

And Arizona had the tragic distinction of having the highest rate of cases in which infected moms pass syphilis on to their babies, potentially leading to death of the child or health problems like deafness and blindness.

Using an antibiotic to prevent these kinds of infections won't "be a magic bullet. but it will be another tool," said Chan, who teaches at Brown University and is chief medical officer of Open Door Health, a health center for gay, lesbian and transgender patients in Providence, Rhode Island.

Experts noted the CDC will have many factors to weigh as it develops the recommendations.

Among them: The drug can cause side effects like stomach problems and rashes after sun exposure. Some research has found it ineffective in heterosexual women. And widespread use of doxycycline as a preventive measure could contribute to mutations that make bacteria impervious to the drug, as has happened with antibiotics before.

Nevertheless, the San Francisco Department of Public Health in October became the first U.S. health department to issue guidance about doxycycline as an infection-prevention measure. And some other

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clinics have been recommending the antibiotic to patients who may be at higher risk.

Derrick Woods-Morrow, a 33-year-old artist and an assistant professor at the Rhode Island School of Design, is an early adopter. Woods-Morrow, said he isn't a fan of condoms — they can break and sometimes people slip them off during sex. But he wants to stay healthy.

About a decade ago, he started taking an anti-viral medication before sex to protect himself from HIV infection. Five years ago, a doctor told him about research into whether doxycycline might protect people from other diseases.

"I thought it was probably in my best interest to protect myself, and my partners as well," he said. He said it's been a positive experience and that he hasn't tested positive for chlamydia, gonorrhea or syphilis while using it.

"I feel like it's a tool to sort of take back the sexual freedoms that someone may have lost and to really enjoy sex and interactions with people with a piece of mind," he said.

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Dems tap Chicago for 2024 convention, cite critical Midwest

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats announced Tuesday that they will hold their party's 2024 national convention in Chicago, choosing the biggest liberal city in the Midwest as they try to keep the momentum going after a strong midterm election performance in the key battleground region.

Organizers from Chicago, Atlanta and New York spent months lobbying to be the site of the convention, but the final decision lay with President Joe Biden, who is expected to formally launch his reelection campaign in the coming weeks.

"Chicago is a great choice," Biden, who was flying to Northern Ireland, said in a statement. "Democrats will gather to showcase our historic progress including building an economy from the middle out and bottom up, not from the top down."

The Democratic National Committee said its convention would be held Aug. 19-22 and noted that Illinois, along with Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota, was part of the critical Midwestern "blue wall," which was key to Democrats' success in the 2020 and 2022 elections. That rosy language omits the fact that Michigan and Wisconsin narrowly broke for Donald Trump in 2016, helping the Republican win the White House.

Chicago is solidly Democratic, as is Illinois. But holding the party's presidential nominating gathering in such a pro-union city demonstrates Biden's commitment to organized labor. The move also could counter Republicans, who are holding their 2024 convention in Milwaukee, located in another swing Midwestern state, Wisconsin.

Republican National Committee Chairman Ronna McDaniel blasted Democrats' "radical agenda" and predicted that voters "will soundly reject whichever out-of-touch liberal the Democrats nominate in Chicago."

The convention will be held at the United Center, home to the NBA's Chicago Bulls and the Chicago Blackhawks of the NHL. Chicago made sense for logistical reasons, with plenty of hotel space and public transportation.

The city is also home to major Democratic donors who can help with raising money to cover costs of a convention. That includes Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, a billionaire businessman and heir to the Hyatt hotel fortune who has contributed millions to Democratic causes and candidates, and was a major proponent for his city getting the convention.

The DNC said that Chicago represents the party's diversity and "formidable coalition" and that the Midwest will "showcase President Biden's economic agenda" including spending on public works as part of a sweeping bipartisan infrastructure package that cleared Congress in 2021.

The 2020 Democratic convention was supposed to be held in Milwaukee but unfolded virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic. Biden delivered a speech accepting his party's nomination that year at a

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nearly empty convention center in Wilmington, Delaware.

Chicago hosted the infamous 1968 Democratic convention, which is best remembered for a brutal clash between police and protesters opposing the Vietnam War. The last Democratic National Convention in the city was in 1996, when President Bill Clinton was headed to a second term.

Pritzker promised Tuesday that the convention would be an “unforgettable event.” He had pointed to Democrats’ desires to expand their Midwestern electoral gains, particularly in Michigan, where their party held the governorship and won control of both chambers of the Legislature during last fall’s midterms.

That Chicago beat out Atlanta was nonetheless a surprise given Georgia’s strategic importance as a swing state. Biden won Georgia two years ago, becoming the first Democrat to do so in a presidential election since Clinton in 1992, and his party now controls both of its Senate seats after wins that drew national attention the last two cycles.

Though Atlanta is as thoroughly Democratic as Chicago and New York, Georgia could very well be a major deciding factor in the 2024 presidential race in a way Illinois will not be.

Still, some top Democrats worried about Georgia’s Republican-controlled Legislature and state laws discouraging union membership and LGBTQ rights. There were also concerns about Georgia’s relaxed firearms laws, especially given the rash of mass shootings around the country — despite gun violence being a persistent problem in Chicago.

But shunning Atlanta for the convention could ultimately serve as a double blow to Georgia, which may also eventually lose its early place in a new Democratic primary calendar.

Biden endorsed moving Georgia to the No. 4 position in a revamped Democratic primary calendar for 2024 — changes meant to better empower the party’s deeply diverse voter base than the old system, which led off with overwhelmingly white Iowa.

But Republican state officials have balked at the Democrats holding a primary on a date that doesn’t coincide with the GOP’s 2024 primary.

As Biden prepares an expected reelection campaign, he is already focused on 2024’s general election, rather than the primary, facing only token opposition from Democratic challengers Marianne Williamson, a spiritual adviser and author, and Robert F. Kennedy Jr., an anti-vaccine activist.

New York City and state are also deeply blue in presidential races. But choosing the city for the convention might have helped Democrats in other parts of the state, its advocates said. Those other parts include Long Island, where Republican gains in key congressional districts helped the party flip the House last year.

Supporters of Atlanta’s bid had argued that the city and the rest of Georgia could help lead a resurgence of Democrats in the South, which remains largely steadfastly Republican.

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens said Tuesday that Biden personally called him to say that Chicago had been chosen.

“They said Atlanta was top two in all the nation, we were hoping we’d be top one,” Dickens told reporters. “But they said next time, maybe.”

Florida fight over ‘baby boxes’ part of bigger culture war

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Safe Haven Baby Boxes and A Safe Haven for Newborns are two charities with similar names and the same goal: providing distressed mothers with a safe place to surrender their unwanted newborns instead of dumping them in trash cans or along roadsides.

But a fight between the two is brewing in the Florida Senate. An existing state law, supported and promoted by the Miami-based A Safe Haven, allows parents to surrender newborns to firefighters and hospital workers without giving their names. A new bill, supported by the Indiana-based Safe Haven Baby Boxes, would give fire stations and hospitals the option to install the group’s ventilated and climate-controlled boxes, where parents could drop off their babies without interacting with fire or hospital employees.

The bill recently passed the Florida House unanimously, but there is a long-shot effort to block it in the Senate, where it might be considered this week. Opponents call the boxes costly, unnecessary and potentially dangerous for the babies, mothers, firefighters and hospital workers. Each side accuses the

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other of being financially driven.

The fight is getting extra attention because Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis and Florida's GOP-dominated Legislature are expected to soon ban abortions performed more than six weeks after conception, lowering the state's current limit of 15 weeks.

Similar baby-box bills have been approved recently by lawmakers in Kansas, Montana and Mississippi and sent to those states' governors for approval. West Virginia's governor recently signed such a bill. The boxes were already allowed in nine states, mostly in the Midwest and South, with the largest numbers in Indiana, Arkansas, and Kentucky, respectively. About 145 boxes have been installed since the first in 2016, with 25 newborns surrendered through one, Safe Haven Baby Boxes says.

Just one baby has been left in Florida's only box, installed two years ago at a central Florida firehouse without state authorization. The boxes open from outside the building, allowing the parent to place the baby in a bassinet as a bag containing instructions and maternal medical advice drops out. The door locks when it is reclosed and the agency is notified electronically. Safe Haven Baby Boxes says the average response time is two minutes.

"Giving women an option of (total) anonymity is just that, an option. Why would (opponents) want to take that away from women?" said the group's founder, firefighter Monica Kelsey, who was abandoned as a newborn and is an outspoken abortion opponent. She accused A Safe Haven for Newborns of fearing a loss of grants if the boxes are installed, something the group denies.

Republican Rep. Jennifer Canady, the bill's lead sponsor, declined an interview request. She said in a statement that her proposed law would be "an important next step to provide options to save lives and protect life at every stage."

Joel Gordon, a spokesman for A Safe Haven for Newborns and deputy chief at a suburban Fort Lauderdale fire department, suggested that Kelsey possibly profits from the boxes. She denies that. Her group gets mixed reviews from organizations that monitor charities.

Gordon also contended that the bill's proponents have opposed all amendments that he says would make the boxes safer and the program more workable. A Safe Haven trains fire departments and hospitals on how to implement the current law.

"It is not an objection to giving the mother as many potentials as possible to help rescue and save these babies. It's the box itself, and the way the box is administered, that gives us concern," Gordon said.

Senate Democratic leader Lauren Book, who heads the bill's opposition, added, "We can do better than putting children in boxes. The safe haven law we have on the books currently is working."

In 2000, Florida became one of the first states to allow babies to be anonymously surrendered for adoption at hospitals and firehouses. Under it, parents can hand over newborns up to 7 days old, no questions asked, assuming there is no evidence of neglect or abuse. Since its enactment, 370 newborns have been legally surrendered, Gordon said.

The new bill would allow but not require fire departments and hospitals to acquire the boxes, which would be leased from Kelsey's group. They cost about \$16,000 installed and there is a \$300 annual maintenance and inspection fee, paid to Kelsey's charity. Sometimes the installation and fees are paid by donors, she said.

"Was that baby (in central Florida) not worth the fight we have put up to keep that box?" she said. "I think it was."

Gordon said only five Florida babies have been illegally abandoned since 2018, and in several recent years that number was zero. He argues that a surrendered baby's mother benefits more from direct interaction with a firefighter or hospital worker, who can assess if she needs medical or psychological care. Such contact also provides her with certainty that her baby is safe, he said.

Gordon said Kelsey's boxes also don't meet Florida public building safety standards and would allow those who have abused their newborn or kidnapped or trafficked the child a way to escape detection. Gordon and Book also say the boxes give terrorists a spot to place a bomb or toxic substance, endangering firefighters and hospital workers — something Kelsey says has never happened.

"Until it does," Book responded. "I want to make sure that the people who are there to protect and serve

our community are kept safe.”

Book, who was recently arrested for trespassing during a protest against the state’s proposed abortion restrictions, said the box bill is part of broader effort by DeSantis and the legislative majority to impose conservative Christian morality on all Floridians, regardless of their personal beliefs.

“You can’t just look at this one piece of policy. You have to look at the whole of what is going on, and I’m just not going to stand for it,” Book said.

Kelsey accused opponents of “grasping at straws.” She said while abusers should be identified and tracked down, it is best for the babies if their parents give them up before the abuse leads to serious injury or death.

If enacted, the bill would take effect July 1.

Abortion pill rulings in conflict: What happens next?

By JESSICA GRESKO and MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Texas case that could cut off access to the most commonly used abortion medication has started on a path through the legal system that could quickly lead to the Supreme Court.

The drug, mifepristone, was approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration more than two decades ago. It’s used in combination with a second drug, misoprostol. Since its approval, mifepristone has been used by more than 5 million women to safely end their pregnancies and today more than half of women who end a pregnancy rely on the drug, the Justice Department said.

But in a far-reaching ruling Friday, a federal judge in Texas blocked the FDA’s approval of the drug following a lawsuit by the pill’s opponents. The ruling, which the judge put on hold for a week to allow for an appeal, could affect access to the drug in every state. On Monday, the Biden administration asked an appeals court to allow access to the drug while the case continues to play out.

There is also a twist: The Texas ruling came at virtually the same time a judge in Washington state, ruling in a different lawsuit brought by liberal states, ordered the FDA not to do anything that might affect the availability of mifepristone in the suing states.

The following is a look at what has happened so far, the conflicting rulings and how the legal fight might be expected to unfold:

HOW DID THE CASE GET STARTED?

The Texas lawsuit over mifepristone was filed in Amarillo late last year. Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative Christian legal group, represents the pill’s opponents, who say the FDA’s approval of mifepristone was flawed. Erin Morrow Hawley, the wife of Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, is one of the lead lawyers in the case.

Why Amarillo? U.S. District Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk, an appointee of former President Donald Trump, is the sole district court judge there, ensuring that all cases filed in the west Texas city land in front of him. Since taking the bench, he has ruled against the Biden administration on several other issues, including immigration and LGBTQ protections.

In March, Kacsmaryk held a hearing in the case that lasted more than four hours and was notable in part because Kacsmaryk sought to delay publicizing that it would happen to avoid protests. His ruling came approximately three weeks later.

The Washington state ruling was issued by Spokane-based Judge Thomas O. Rice, an appointee of former President Barack Obama.

WHAT IS GOING ON NOW?

The Biden administration is asking the New Orleans-based 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to prevent Kacsmaryk’s ruling from taking effect for now. Late Monday, the appeals court ordered the other side to respond by midnight Tuesday.

“If allowed to take effect, the court’s order would thwart FDA’s scientific judgment and severely harm women, particularly those for whom mifepristone is a medical or practical necessity,” the Justice Department wrote to the appeals court, which handles appeals from Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. The department

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said the drug is used not only for abortions but also to manage miscarriages.

Also on Monday, the Biden administration asked the court in Washington to clarify its order, which the Justice Department notes is in "significant tension" with the Texas ruling. It would seem impossible for the FDA to comply with Kacsmark's nationwide order withholding approval of mifepristone, and the Washington order requiring its availability in the states that sued. The Biden administration asked for clarification by Friday, noting that Kacsmark's ruling will take effect at midnight Central Time on Saturday assuming the appeals court doesn't step in.

For now, at least, the Texas case seems a better bet to reach the Supreme Court. But it's not totally clear how the Washington ruling might affect Kacsmark's order.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN NEXT?

The administration's request in the Texas case will be handled by three judges on the appeals court. The appeals court is dominated by conservative judges, but it's not yet clear which three judges will handle the case.

The panel of judges that reviews the case has options. One option is to grant the administration's request for a temporary pause of Kacsmark's ruling. That would essentially relieve the court of the deadline pressure imposed by Kacsmark. It would give the court more time to weigh whether to issue a more enduring hold on the ruling that presumably would last until the case is finally resolved.

The judges also could grant a more lasting stay of Kacsmark's ruling in the first instance, once both sides have made arguments in writing. The appeals court could also reject the administration's plea.

ON TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL

Whatever happens at the appeals court, the losing side will almost certainly will take its case to the Supreme Court. Once again, the administration could first ask for an immediate pause to give the justices more time to fully consider the issue.

Conservative justices last year overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark abortion rights case, and said states should decide whether to allow abortions within their borders. But if they hoped that their decision would remove abortion from their docket, the fight over the abortion pill shows that it's not gone.

This time, though, while the case is about an abortion pill, the issues that are headed the court's way are about the rules that govern federal regulations and technicalities in the law: Did FDA take the right steps before approving the use of mifepristone? Do the anti-abortion groups and doctors who are suing the FDA have the legal right, or standing, to be in court? Did too much time elapse since the approval of mifepristone in 2000?

There is no timetable for when the Supreme Court might act, especially if a temporary pause keeps the FDA's approval of the pill in place.

Small business owners feel the credit crunch

By MAE ANDERSON and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — When Nat West, owner of cider-making company Reverend Nat's Hard Cider, decided to supplement his wholesale business by opening a taproom in a bustling neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, he thought getting financing would be a breeze.

After all, he was only seeking \$50,000, has been in business for 11 years, and takes in more than \$1 million in annual revenue.

In February and March, West reached out to three lenders he had previously gotten financing from, including one where he has an existing line of credit. To his surprise, he was rejected.

"I feel like it's really weird, it's such a small amount of money for a business that has so much ongoing, sustained revenue and has been in the same community for a long time," he said.

West isn't alone. Borrowing for small businesses was already constrained due to rising interest rates. Following the recent collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank, some lenders — particularly the small and midsize banks that serve small businesses — may be forced to tighten credit further, since they're seeing an outflow of deposits, which means they need to retain capital. And banks are being more cau-

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tious in general due to uncertainty about the economy.

"It's hard to read how severe this is going to be, but it's certainly going to be significant and when you look at how things play out, small businesses are hit the hardest," said Ray Keating, chief economist for the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council.

According to the latest Biz2Credit Small Business Lending Index released in February, the approval rates of small business loan requests at big banks have fallen for nine consecutive months. The larger banks approved just 14.2% of applications in February, down from 28.3% in February 2020. Small banks granted about 20% of loan applications this February, but they were approving about half of all requests back in early 2020, before the pandemic hit.

An overall tightening of credit will help slow down the economy and ease inflation, which is what the Federal Reserve hopes to achieve by hiking interest rates, said Rohit Arora, CEO and co-founder of Biz2Credit. But that means that small businesses -- a big job creator and source of innovation for the economy -- will be left in the lurch.

"It will be the small companies that suffer the most if this continues," he said.

Basic Fun, a Boca Raton, Florida-based maker of such toys as Care Bears and Lincoln Logs, had to temporarily scuttle plans for an acquisition due to the crunch. CEO Jay Foreman said he was ready to go with non-binding agreements with 12 of the prospective 23 lenders lined up in late February and early March. But that number shrank to two after Silicon Valley Bank failed and triggered the recent banking turmoil.

"It's just not the right timing now as lenders appear unclear about the broader credit markets and seem to be clutching the purse strings tightly at this point," Foreman said. "We just have to ride this out until conditions are right to arrange the proper financing for our acquisition."

Companies that have existing lines of credit are seeing interest rates increase. James Carron, who operates Flatirons Pharmaceuticals, in Longmont, Colorado, has seen rates increase for his line of credit that's about \$150,000. Before the pandemic, the rate was 6.99%, but that went up to 10%. Now it's 13% and rapidly approaching 14%. Other potential lenders he contacted had even higher rates.

So, Carron said he's put off the purchase of two servers and additional hardware security upgrades that he had planned for the first half of this year. He's monitoring the economy now to see when he might be able to make the purchases.

A credit crunch affects small businesses more than larger ones, he said, because smaller businesses have fewer levers they can pull to get financing.

"We can't issue corporate bonds or have other money available to us," he said. "Large corporations have multiple avenues for them to secure reasonable rates for funding. A small business owner doesn't have that ability."

In the U.K., Dawn Barber has delayed some expansion plans because credit terms have gotten stricter. Barber is the founder and managing director at Web Shop Direct, which runs the online fashion brands UK Tights and UK Swimwear. She noted that her business has done well all through the pandemic, as her customers are looking to splurge on little luxuries.

Barber said that her business -- which generates annual revenue of 2.5 million pounds (\$3.1 million) -- is essentially self-funded but when she recently turned to PayPal for extra funding, the financial terms were stricter compared to a year ago. Barber wanted to borrow 150,000 pounds (\$186,195) but learned that she would get charged 10,000 pounds (\$12,416) upfront, instead of the usual 6,000 pounds (\$7,449) and that she needed to pay within six months, instead of nine months.

She decided the terms were too steep. She's put a hold on officially launching a new line of wellness products, which includes loungewear and candles and was expected to account for 20% of her annual sales.

As for West, the Oregon cider-maker, he had to put \$10,000 on his personal credit card to finance the new taproom, which is open. He's still short of what he needs, but that will keep the taproom running for now, he said.

"I'm super thankful I can put it together," he said. "A lot of people will just have to put their dreams on hold."

4 in 10 say next vehicle may be electric: AP-NORC/EPIC poll

By TOM KRISHER, MATTHEW DALY and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Many Americans aren't yet sold on going electric for their next cars, a new poll shows, with high prices and too few charging stations the main deterrents. About 4 in 10 U.S. adults are at least somewhat likely to switch, but the history-making shift from the country's century-plus love affair with gas-driven vehicles still has a ways to travel.

The poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago shows that the Biden administration's plans to dramatically raise U.S. EV sales could run into resistance from consumers. Only 8% of U.S. adults say they or someone in their household owns or leases an electric vehicle, and just 8% say their household has a plug-in hybrid vehicle.

Even with tax credits of up to \$7,500 to buy a new EV, it could be difficult to persuade drivers to ditch their gas-burning cars and trucks for vehicles without tailpipe emissions.

Auto companies are investing billions in factories and battery technology in an effort to speed up the switch to EVs to cut pollution and fight climate change. Under a greenhouse gas emissions proposal from the Environmental Protection Agency, about two-thirds of all new vehicle sales could have to be EVs by 2032. President Joe Biden has set a goal that up to half of all new vehicle sales be electric by 2030 to cut emissions and fight climate change.

But only 19% of U.S. adults say it's "very" or "extremely" likely they would purchase an electric vehicle the next time they buy a car, according to the poll, and 22% say it's somewhat likely. About half — 47% — say it's not likely they would go electric.

Six in 10 said the high cost is a major reason they wouldn't and about a quarter cited it as a minor reason. Only 16% said the high cost would not be a factor in rejecting the EV.

New electric vehicles now cost an average of more than \$58,000, according to Kelley Blue Book, a price that's beyond the reach of many U.S. households. (The average vehicle sold in the U.S. costs just under \$46,000.) Tax credits approved under last year's Inflation Reduction Act are designed to bring EV prices down and attract more buyers.

But new rules proposed by the U.S. Treasury Department could result in fewer electric vehicles qualifying for a full \$7,500 federal tax credit later.

Many vehicles will only be eligible for half the full credit, \$3,750, an amount that may not be enough to entice them away from less-costly gasoline-powered vehicles.

About three-quarters say too few charging stations is a reason they wouldn't go electric, including half who call it a major reason. Two-thirds cite a preference for gasoline vehicles as a major or minor reason they won't go electric.

"I'm an internal combustion engine kind of guy," said Robert Piascik, 65, a musician who lives in Westerville, Ohio, a Columbus suburb. "I can't see myself spending a premium to buy something that I don't like as much as the lower-priced option."

Although he has nothing against EVs and would consider buying one as the technology improves and prices fall, Piascik said the shorter traveling range, lack of places to charge and long refueling times would make it harder for him to go on trips.

In his 2017 BMW 3-Series, all he has to do is pull into a gas station and fill up in minutes, Piascik said. "The early adopters have to put up with a lack of infrastructure," he said.

Biden has set a goal of 500,000 EV charging stations nationwide, and \$5 billion from the 2021 infrastructure law has been set aside to install or upgrade chargers along 75,000 miles (120,000 kilometers) of highway from coast to coast.

Electric car giant Tesla will, for the first time, make some of its charging stations available to all U.S. electric vehicles by the end of next year, under a plan announced in February by the White House. The plan to open the nation's largest and most reliable charging network to all drivers is a potential game-changer in promoting EV use, experts say.

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High prices and a lack of available chargers are cited by at least half of Democrats and Republicans as main reasons for not buying an EV, but there's a partisan divide in how Americans view electric vehicles. About half of Republicans, 54%, say a preference for gasoline-powered vehicles is a major reason for not buying an EV, while only 29% of Democrats say that.

James Rogers of Sacramento, California, a Democrat who voted for Biden, calls climate change an urgent problem, and he supports Biden's overall approach. Still, he does not own an EV and isn't planning to buy one, saying the price must come down and the charging infrastructure upgraded.

Even with a tax credit that could put the average price for a new EV close to \$50,000, "it's too much" money, said Rogers, 62, a retired customer service representative. He's willing to pay as much as \$42,000 for an EV and hopes the market will soon drive prices down, Rogers said.

In an encouraging finding for EV proponents, the poll shows 55% of adults under 30 say they are at least somewhat likely they will get an electric vehicle next time, as do 49% of adults ages 30 to 44, compared with just 31% of those 45 and older.

And people in the U.S. do see the benefits to an EV. Saving money on gasoline is the main factor cited by those who want to buy an EV, with about three-quarters of U.S. adults calling it a major or minor reason.

Making an impact on climate change is another big reason many would buy an EV, with 35% saying that reducing their personal impact on the climate is a major reason and 31% saying it's a minor reason.

Krisher reported from Detroit.

The AP-NORC poll of 5,408 adults was conducted Jan. 31 to Feb. 15 using a combined sample of interviews from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population, and interviews from opt-in online panels. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 1.7 percentage points. The AmeriSpeak panel is recruited randomly using address-based sampling methods, and respondents later were interviewed online or by phone.

Germany launches plan to relax rigid family name system

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's justice minister on Tuesday launched plans to relax the country's strict restrictions on family names — for example, allowing couples to take double-barreled surnames and pass them on to their children.

The current system "is about as up-to-date as a coal stove and as flexible as concrete," Justice Minister Marco Buschmann said in a statement as he published the draft legislation.

As it stands, one partner in a married couple — but not both — can add the other partner's name to his or her surname, but their children can't carry both surnames.

The reform will allow both partners to take on a double surname, with or without a hyphen, and for their children to take that name too. Even if the parents both keep their original names, they will be able to give their children a double-barreled surname, regardless of whether they are married. The new system still won't allow names that are more than double-barreled.

Buschmann also foresees making it easier for stepchildren or children of divorced parents to change their family names. And he wants to allow the use of gender-adjusted forms of surnames for people with names from languages in which that is common — a change that would, for example, benefit the Sorbs, an indigenous Slavic minority in parts of eastern Germany.

The legislation, which is supposed to take effect at the beginning of 2025, still requires the approval of the Cabinet and Parliament.

It is one of several social reform projects that Chancellor Olaf Scholz's socially liberal three-party governing coalition agreed to embark on when it took office in December 2021.

Fancy a dip? An Olympic reboot for Paris' toxic River Seine

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Even before he has dipped his toes into the murky waters of Paris' famous but forbidden River Seine, French triathlete Thibaut Rigau deau is already fielding questions from disbelieving friends.

"Are you scared of swimming in the Seine?" he says they ask him. "It looks disgusting."

For decades, it was. Though immortalized in art, literature and song, and cherished by lovers who whisper sweet nothings or tearfully part on the privacy of its banks, the river was ecologically dying. It was too toxic for most fish and for swimmers, largely useful only as a waterway for goods and people or as a watery grave for discarded bicycles and other trash. Swimming in the Seine has, with some exceptions, been off-limits since 1923.

Now, however, its admittedly unappetizing green-brown waters hide a tale of rebirth.

A costly and complex cleanup is resuscitating the Seine just in time for it to play a starring role in the 2024 Paris Olympics and, after that, for it to genuinely live up to its billing as the world's most romantic river, one that's actually fit again for people. And in a warming world, a renewed ability to take cooling dips in the river should help France's capital remain liveable during increasingly frequent heat waves. It possibly might also inspire other cities to invest in reclaiming their waterways.

"It will create waves, so to speak, across the world because a lot of cities are watching Paris," says Dan Angelescu, a scientist who is tracking the Seine's water quality for City Hall, with regular sampling.

"It's the beginning of a movement," he says. "We hope so, at least."

The Olympic deadline has supercharged a cleanup that has been decades in the making. Without the imperative of having to be ready for 10,500 Olympians in July and August next year, followed by 4,400 Paralympians, City Hall officials say it would have taken many more years to fund the multi-pronged, 1.4 billion-euro (\$1.5 billion) effort. Because as well as hosting outdoor swim races, the Seine is going to be the centerpiece of Paris' unprecedented Olympic opening ceremony. For the first time, it will take place not in a stadium setting but along the river and its banks.

So it needs to be ready. Officials have been going after homes upstream of Paris and houseboats on the Seine that were emptying their sewage and wastewater directly into the river. An Olympic law adopted in 2018 gave moored boats two years to hook up to Paris' sewage network. Sewage treatment plants on the Seine and its tributary, the Marne, are also being improved.

And more than half a billion euros (dollars) is going into huge storage basins and other public works that will reduce the need to spill bacteria-laden wastewater into the Seine untreated when it rains. One storage facility is being dug next to Paris' Austerlitz train station. The giant hole will hold the equivalent of 20 Olympic swimming pools of dirty water that will now be treated rather than being spat raw through storm drains in the river.

City Hall says the water quality is already improving and that there are many more types of fish than the two or three species that were the only ones hardy enough to survive in the filth a few decades ago. It says samples taken daily last July and August in the stretch of river where Olympians and Paralympians will compete showed the water quality was overwhelmingly "good." By their sports' standards, that means acceptable.

Setting off from the Seine's ornate Alexandre III bridge, triathletes will race first in 2024, with men on July 30, followed by women the next day. Then come marathon swimmers, on Aug. 8 and 9, and para-triathletes on Sept. 1 and 2.

Rigau deau, who competed in para-triathlon at the 2021 Tokyo games, is thrilled by the prospect. He's hoping for an early taste of the experience when Paris hosts warm-up swims in the Seine this summer to hone its readiness for 2024. It will be Rigau deau's first-ever dip in his home river.

"We will be the 'testers,'" he says. "I hope we don't get sick."

After the games, the river should then reopen to everyone — in the summer of 2025. City Hall says five potential bathing spots are being studied within Paris itself, with others a bit further afield.

Officials hope that after so many years where swimming in the Seine was unthinkable, Parisians will start

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to feel that it's safe to go back in the water when they see Olympians and Paralympians leading the way. "It's going to change our lives," Rigaudeau says. "But it's also true that because everyone thinks that it's really very dirty, I'm not sure if people will go of their own accord, at least at first."

Jeffrey Schaeffer in Paris contributed. More AP coverage of the Paris Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2024-paris-olympic-games> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Today in History: April 12, Civil War begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, April 12, the 102nd day of 2023. There are 263 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 12, 1861, the Civil War began as Confederate forces opened fire on Fort Sumter in South Carolina. On this date:

In 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage in Warm Springs, Georgia, at age 63; he was succeeded by Vice President Harry S. Truman.

In 1955, the Salk vaccine against polio was declared safe and effective.

In 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man to fly in space, orbiting the earth once before making a safe landing.

In 1963, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was arrested and jailed in Birmingham, Alabama, charged with contempt of court and parading without a permit. (During his time behind bars, King wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail.")

In 1981, former world heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis, 66, died in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In 1985, Sen. Jake Garn, R-Utah, became the first sitting member of Congress to fly in space as the shuttle Discovery lifted off.

In 1988, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office issued a patent to Harvard University for a genetically engineered mouse, the first time a patent was granted for an animal life form.

In 1990, in its first meeting, East Germany's first democratically elected parliament acknowledged responsibility for the Nazi Holocaust, and asked the forgiveness of Jews and others who had suffered.

In 1992, after five years in the making, Euro Disneyland (now called Disneyland Paris) opened in Marne-La-Vallee, France, amid controversy as French intellectuals bemoaned the invasion of American pop culture.

In 2015, Hillary Rodham Clinton jumped back into presidential politics, announcing in a video her much-awaited second campaign for the White House.

In 2020, Christians around the world celebrated Easter Sunday isolated in their homes by the coronavirus. St. Peter's Square was barricaded to keep out crowds. Pope Francis celebrated Easter Mass inside the largely vacant basilica, calling for global solidarity in the face of the pandemic.

Ten years ago: U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, visiting South Korea, delivered a stark warning to North Korea not to test-fire a mid-range missile while tamping down anxiety caused by a new U.S. intelligence report suggesting significant progress in the communist regime's nuclear weapons program. Guan Tianlang, a 14-year-old from China, made history as the youngest player to make the cut in a PGA Tour-sanctioned event; despite being the first player at Augusta National to get hit with a one-shot penalty for slow play, Guan made the cut under the 10-shot rule at the Masters. American chess grandmaster Robert Byrne, 84, died in Ossining, New York.

Five years ago: Police in Philadelphia arrested two black men at a Starbucks; the men had been asked to leave after one of them was denied access to the restroom. (Starbucks apologized and, weeks later, closed thousands of stores for part of the day to conduct anti-bias training.) Carl Ferrer, the chief executive of Backpage.com, which authorities described as an "online brothel," pleaded guilty to California and federal charges including conspiracy and money laundering, and agreed to testify against others at the website. Schoolteachers in Oklahoma ended two weeks of walkouts. The Screen Actors Guild issued new guidelines calling for an end to auditions and professional meetings in private hotel rooms and residences

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in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal.

One year ago: Vladimir Putin vowed that Russia's bloody offensive in Ukraine would continue until its goals are fulfilled and insisted the campaign was going as planned, despite a major withdrawal in the face of stiff Ukrainian opposition and significant losses. A gunman in a gas mask and a construction vest set off a smoke canister on a rush-hour subway train in Brooklyn and shot and wounded 10 people. (Frank James, 62, would later be arrested and plead guilty to the shooting.) Federal data confirmed that 2021 had been the deadliest year in U.S. history, brought on by COVID-19 and an unprecedented spike in adolescent drug overdoses. Actor and standup comic Gilbert Gottfried died at age 67.

Today's Birthdays: Playwright Alan Ayckbourn (AYK'-bohrn) is 84. Jazz musician Herbie Hancock is 83. Rock singer John Kay (Steppenwolf) is 79. Actor Ed O'Neill is 77. Actor Dan Lauria is 76. Talk show host David Letterman is 76. Author Scott Turow is 74. Actor-playwright Tom Noonan is 72. R&B singer JD Nicholas (The Commodores) is 71. Singer Pat Travers is 69. Actor Andy Garcia is 67. Movie director Walter Salles (SAL-ihs) is 67. Country singer Vince Gill is 66. Model/TV personality J Alexander is 65. Rock musician Will Sergeant (Echo & the Bunnymen) is 65. Rock singer Art Alexakis (Everclear) is 61. Country singer Deryl Dodd is 59. Folk-pop singer Amy Ray (Indigo Girls) is 59. Actor Alicia Coppola is 55. Rock singer Nicholas Hexum (311) is 53. Actor Retta is 53. Actor Nicholas Brendon is 52. Actor Shannen Doherty is 52. Actor Marley Shelton is 49. Actor Sarah Jane Morris is 46. Actor Jordana Spiro is 46. Rock musician Guy Berryman (Coldplay) is 45. Actor Riley Smith is 45. Actor Claire Danes is 44. Actor Jennifer Morrison is 44. Actor Matt McGorry is 37. Actor Brooklyn Decker is 36. Contemporary Christian musician Joe Rickard (Red) is 36. Rock singer-musician Brendon Urie (Panic! at the Disco) is 36. Actor Saoirse (SUR'-shuh) Ronan is 29.